

THE WORKS

OF

THE REV. RICHARD WATSON.

VOLUME VI.

CONTAINING

CONVERSATIONS FOR THE YOUNG,

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY TO "SCOUGAL'S LIFE OF GOD
IN THE SOUL OF MAN,"

A LETTER TO WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.,

AND

A DEFENCE OF THE WESLEYAN-METHODIST MISSIONS
IN THE WEST INDIES.

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CONVERSATIONS FOR THE YOUNG:

DESIGNED TO PROMOTE

THE PROFITABLE READING.

OF

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

FIFTH EDITION.

Hæc sunt verba tua, Christe, Veritas Æterna! quamvis non uno tempore prolatæ,
nec uno in loco conscripta Quia ergo tua sunt, et vera, gratanter mihi et
fideliter cuncta accipienda. *Tua* sunt, et tu ea protulisti; et *mea* quoque
sunt, quia pro salute mea ea edidisti.

KEMPIE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following little volume is of humble pretensions, but has *aimed* at supplying the want of such an Introduction to the reading of the holy Scriptures, by young people who have not many advantages from books, or leisure, as should furnish them with *general views* on several important subjects, and fix in their minds such *first principles* as may assist them to “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the words of eternal life; guard them against fatal errors; and open to them that scheme of Christianity, in experience and practice, to which every part of Divine Revelation is made subservient, and from which it derives its only value.

LONDON,
April 25th, 1830.

CONVERSATIONS

FOR THE YOUNG.

&c.

CONVERSATION I.

Introduction—Religion—Use of Reason.

A.—I wish instruction on several subjects which appear necessary for me either previously to know, or to have before my mind in a connected view, in order to peruse the Old and New Testaments with greater profit: Will you then allow me to propose to you such questions as may occur to me in reading the Scriptures, that I may have the advantage of your superior information?

B.—Most willingly; provided it be understood between us, that you seek this kind of knowledge with sincerity and seriousness; and that you will be contented with brief answers, such as may merely excite you to a more diligent reading of the word of God itself, and of such books as will more fully unfold to you its sacred mysteries.

A.—My questions will all be of a religious kind, or such as have some relation to that system of religion which is contained in the holy Scriptures; and I trust I have been already taught to view all subjects of this class as so connected with my everlasting interests and hopes, that I never trifle with them; and as for your other condition, I shall be so grateful for your instruction as to leave the measure of it to your own prudence, only begging permission to repeat or vary my inquiries when I feel a difficulty in comprehending any thing.

B.—What then is your first question?

A.—To begin at the foundation,—may I be permitted to inquire into the import of the word RELIGION?

B.—The word is probably derived from a Latin verb which signifies “to bind,” or “to tie fast,” and well expresses the obligation of the creature to love and serve God, and those gracious promises and covenants by which God has been pleased to bind himself to bless and protect his obedient creatures. In its large and commonly-received sense, it is used to signify the worship and obedience we render to Almighty God, as the Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Governor of the world; and it includes the discoveries which God has made of himself and of his will respecting us; his dispensations of goodness, justice and mercy; and our acts of faith, thanksgiving, prayer, and submission. When it is used more specially, as when we say, “the religion of the Jews,” or “the religion of Christians,” it then means that system of faith and worship which is received by each. But do you know upon what religion is founded?

A.—I have a general conception of its reasons; but I wait to hear them stated by you.

B.—The grounds of religion are two; the first includes the right of God, and the duties of rational creatures; the second, the insufficiency of creatures, and the infinite sufficiency of God.

A.—I understand by the former, that the right of God to rule the creatures he has made, preserved, and redeemed, and to receive from them worship and homage, is of the most absolute kind, since they owe their being itself, and all that renders existence happy, to him alone. But what do you mean by the insufficiency of the creature as a ground of religion?

B.—We are not independent creatures. We cannot sustain life, any more than we could give it. We cannot control the circumstances by which we are affected for good or evil beyond a very limited degree; we find nothing on earth which fully satisfies our desires, and we shall soon enter a new and unknown state of being, over the condition of which we have no control. What greater proof can we have of our own

insufficiency? The office of religion, therefore, is to lead us to God; to interest us in his care; to obtain from him, in answer to our prayers, protection, guidance, and aid; and to establish and maintain relations of friendship with him in time and eternity. He alone is able to supply the wants of our nature, and so to order our condition that it may be “well with us;” and to this he has condescended to engage himself by promise. Thus he said to Abraham, “I am the Almighty God;” or, as read in the old translation, “I am God ALL-SUFFICIENT; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” He is all-sufficient because he is almighty, for none but an almighty Being could be to us an all-sufficient God. The grand reason of religion rests therefore upon the dependence and weakness of the creature; its great end is to connect us with the all-sufficiency of God.

A.—Is not religion distinguished into natural and revealed?

B.—It is; but the distinction has no warrant in the holy Scriptures, which always contemplate men as enjoying the benefits of those revelations of the character and will of God, which were made under the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations; or, as having wilfully perverted the original traditions of the first ages, and as being involved in a moral darkness brought upon themselves.

A.—How then was the phrase “natural religion” introduced into theological language?

B.—First. Because it seems formerly to have been taken for granted, that some of the best notions among the Heathen on morals and religion, were the deductions of their own reason from observing the phenomena of nature and the course of God’s providential government; whereas, in truth, the religious knowledge of the early Patriarchs was transmitted to all the tribes and nations descended from them; and the doctrines of Judaism were also not wholly unknown to those ancient nations with whom they had intercourse through many ages. Second. Because a class of Divines in modern times thought, that they could best refute objectors to the Christian Revelation, by supposing a system of religious doctrines and duties rationally deducible from the works and government of

God, and then proving how exactly revealed religion harmonized with this rational system.

A.—I remember to have read one of these books on natural religion, in which the author professed to forget all he had learned from the Bible, and to confine himself wholly to rational deductions from acknowledged principles and facts.

B.—But did you not wonder that this philosopher should be so much wiser than the philosophers of Greece, Rome, Egypt, and India, of whose contradictions, errors, and perplexities on the essence and perfections of God, the immortality of the soul, and the distinctions of right and wrong, which are fundamental principles in religion, you had both read and heard?

A.—Truly that did surprise me, and I could not help suspecting that such writers could not, so completely as they pretended, place their minds in the state of those who had never seen the holy Scriptures; and that they attributed discoveries to the strength of their reason, with which they had previously become acquainted from the word of God.

B.—What would you think of a person closing his eyes, and then professing to give a lecture on light and colours, in order to show how an observant and philosophic man, although born blind, might conceive of, and describe them?

A.—I should think him very absurd, because his knowledge of light and colours, derived from his senses, must necessarily influence all his conceptions, and the terms by which he would express them.

B.—It is so in the case of writers on natural religion, and with those professed infidels who have appeared in Christian nations. That which they know aright, they have borrowed from the Scriptures; and that which is erroneous and misleading in their works, may be fairly attributed to themselves. At the same time you are always to recollect, that there are many subjects revealed to us by God to which a right reason gives its subsequent testimony, although it could not have discovered them; and that the works of nature, and the general course of human events, do not only in many respects correspond with, but mightily corroborate, the truth of the doctrines contained in the Scriptures.

A.—Will you give a few instances ?

B.—The marks of design and contrivance in the material world confirm the doctrine of the creation of the world by God, who is an infinite intelligence ; the vastness of nature confirms the doctrine of his omnipotence ; its manifest dependence upon some one power, which must always be present to uphold, control, and renew it, confirms the doctrine of God's omnipresence ; the oneness of design, and the intimate connexion of the various parts of the universe, confirm the doctrine of the divine unity ; the course of events, so little controllable by man, and so often controlling him, indicates that the world is under superior government ; and the almost uniform connexion which we see between vice and misery, and between virtue and happiness, establishes the doctrine of holy writ, that the Governor of the world is a Just and Holy Being. Many other instances might be stated, and indeed there are few doctrines of the Bible, except those which relate to the deep and mysterious nature and counsels of that Being whom none can know “to perfection,” but have a strong rational evidence, in addition to that stamp of divine authority which is itself sufficient to confirm their truth. But you are to recollect, that the rational evidence of a truth which we attain after that truth has been revealed, is not to be concluded within the limits of man's rational powers, independent of a revelation from God.

A.—I thank you for this distinction ; the disregard of which I now see may be the source of great error : But what then is the true use of reason in matters of religion ?

B.—You put an important question ; since the whole of the Scriptures are addressed to us as rational beings, yet as rational beings, both needing instruction, and who through a corrupt and perverse will are often indisposed to receive conviction. There is, first, an intellectual use of our reason, in reference to what purports to be a revelation from God. This consists in examining its evidences in order to ascertain whether the proof of its divine authority be adequate and sufficient ; and then, this being admitted, in fairly and honestly interpreting its meaning, without forcing a sense upon any part of it in compliance with our own previous opinions or prejudices.

But there is also a moral use of reason in matters of this kind, the obligation of which too many are apt to forget. This consists in using it humbly, under a sense of the weakness and imperfection of our own powers; and with docility, as being willing to receive truth at all hazards and sacrifices; and also devotionally, so that, accompanying our investigations with prayer to the “Father of lights,” we may be preserved from error, and led into all truth. You must also ever remember that the evidence of the truth of Scripture and of its leading doctrines is so given, that it shall not in all cases necessarily effect conviction, like a mathematical demonstration. It is addressed to the humble, and teachable, and serious; but if men follow error, they will be sure to overtake it; and if they love vice, their judgments will always be perverted by it. These are moral laws which we often see in force in the common history of men’s lives and conduct; but they have an awful efficiency in matters of religion. Hence the incredulity of the Jews, which resisted the clearest evidence of the divine mission of our Lord: “They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.” In order to escape from the force of fact, they adopted the absurd theory, that Christ “cast out devils by Beelzebub, the chief of the devils;” and by that they were blinded and hardened. They stand therefore as the monitory type of all unbelievers, to the end of time, who run for shelter from the convictions of their minds and consciences to absurdities, which, except on religious subjects, no man would or could espouse. Wherever there is pride, levity, and worldliness, errors in religion will follow, and that in proportion to the circumstances of temptation under which those who indulge them are placed.

A.—You admonish me, that in turning my attention to the Scriptures of inspired truth, in order to inform myself in “the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God” concerning me, I am engaged in a very serious and responsible work.

B.—Even so; for “this is not a vain thing, it is for thy life.” But be of good cheer, “the meek will he guide in judgment;” and “this is life eternal, to know the living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.”

CONVERSATION II.

Inspiration of the Scriptures—Advantages of Revelation.

A.—As I have satisfied myself both from the works I have read, and my own religious experience, however limited, of the truth and excellency of the Bible, I will not ask you to go formally into the proofs of the divine authority of the holy Scriptures ; I shall nevertheless be happy to hear from you any confirmatory remarks on this point, that may incidentally arise out of the subjects on which I seek information. Allow me, however, to ask, In what sense am I to understand that “ all Scripture is given by inspiration of God ? ”

B.—It is the more necessary that you should understand this, because even some Christian writers, whom you may meet with, have spoken obscurely and unsatisfactorily on the subject, dividing inspiration into different kinds, and assigning it in different degrees to different portions of the holy volume.

A.—By inspiration, I conclude, I am to understand, that the sacred writers composed their works under so plenary and immediate an influence of the Holy Spirit, that God may be said to speak by them to man, and not merely that they spoke to men in the name of God, and by his authority.

B.—Precisely so ; and you see that there is a considerable difference between the two propositions. Each supposes an authentic revelation from God ; but the former view secures the Scriptures from all error both as to the subjects spoken and the manner of expressing them. This too is the doctrine taught in the Scriptures themselves, which declare, not only that the Prophets and Apostles spoke in the name of God, but that God spake by them as his instruments. “ The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake.” “ Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet.” “ The prophecy came not of old time, by the will of man ; but holy men of God

spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." For this reason, not only that the matter contained in the book of "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms," (the usual phrase by which the Jews designated the whole Old Testament,) was true ; but that the Books were WRITTEN under divine inspiration, they are called collectively by our Lord and by his Apostles, THE SCRIPTURES, in contradistinction to all other writings ;—a term which you will recollect that the Apostle Peter applies also to the writings of St. Paul, and which therefore verifies them as standing on the same level with the books of the Old Testament as to their inspiration : "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you ; as also in his Epistles, speaking of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." The Apostles also expressly claim an inspiration, not only as to the subjects on which they wrote, but as to the words in which they expressed themselves. Further, our Lord promised to them the Holy Spirit "to guide them into all truth ;" and that he was not to fulfil his office by suggesting thoughts only, but words, is clear from Christ's discourse with them on the subject of the persecutions they were to endure for "his name's sake :" " And when they bring you into the synagogues, and unto Magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say ; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say ; for it is not ye that speak ; but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." This inspiration of words is also asserted by St. Paul as to himself and his brethren, when he says to the Corinthians, " Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth ; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Thus we find that the claim which the sacred writers make on this subject is, that they were in truth what they have been aptly called, "the penmen of the Holy Ghost ;" and that the words in which they clothed "the wisdom given unto them" were words "taught" by the Holy Spirit.

A.—But how, then, am I to account for that difference of style which is observable in each ? that manner, too, so natural to each, and so distinct in all ? with those reasonings, recollections of memory, and other indications of the working of the mind of each writer in its own character and temperament ?

B.—Some persons, observing this, have concluded their style and manner to be entirely human, whilst their thoughts were either wholly divine, or so superintended by the Holy Ghost as to have been adopted by him, and therefore, although sometimes natural, to be of equal authority as if they had been exclusively of divine suggestion. This, indeed, would be sufficient to oblige our implicit credence to their writings, as being from God ; but it falls below the force of the passages above cited, and which apply the divine agency to the suggestion of words also.

A.—How, then, am I to understand the case ?

B.—Simply by considering that an inspiration of words, either by suggesting those most fit to express the thoughts, or by over-ruling the selection of such words from the common store acquired by, and laid up in, the mind of each writer, is quite compatible with the fact, that a peculiarity and appropriateness of manner might still be left to them separately. To suppose that an inspiration of terms, as well as thoughts, could not take place without producing one uniform style and manner, is to suppose that the minds of the writers would thus become entirely passive under the influence of the Holy Spirit ; whereas it is easily conceivable that the verbiage, style, and manner of each was not so much displaced, as elevated, enriched, and employed by the Holy Spirit ; and that there was a previous fitness, in all these respects, in all the sacred penmen, for which they were chosen to be the instruments of writing, under the aid and direction of the Holy Ghost, such portions of the general revelation as the wisdom of God assigned to each of them. On the other hand, whilst it is so conceivable that the words and manner of each might be appropriated to his own design by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it by no means follows that both were not greatly altered, as well as superintended, although they still retained a

general similarity to the uninfluenced style and manner of each, and still presented a characteristic variety. As none of their writings on ordinary occasions, and when uninspired, have come down to us, we cannot judge of the degree of this difference ; and therefore no one can with any just reason affirm that their writings are “the word of God as to the doctrine, but the word of man as to the channel of conveyance.” Certain it is, that a vast difference may be remarked between the writings of the Apostles, and those of the most eminent fathers of the times nearest to them ; and that not only as to precision and strength of thought, but also as to language. This circumstance is at least strongly presumptive, that, although the style of inspired men was not stripped of the characteristic peculiarity of the writers, it was greatly exalted and controlled.

A.—Do you conceive, then, that the same force of inspiration, so to speak, was exerted upon each of the sacred writers, or upon the same writer throughout his writings, whatever might be its subject ?

B.—There is no necessity that we should so state the case, in order to maintain what is essential to our faith,—the plenary inspiration of each of the sacred writers. In miracles there was no needless application of divine power. Traditional history and written chronicles, facts of known occurrence, and opinions which were received by all, are often inserted or referred to by the sacred writers. There needed no miraculous operation upon the memory to recall what the memory was furnished with, or to reveal a fact which the writers previously and perfectly knew : But their plenary inspiration consisted in this, that they were kept from all lapses of memory, or inadequate conceptions, even on these subjects ; and on all others the degree of communication and influence, both as to doctrine, facts, and the terms in which they were to be recorded for the edification of the church, was proportioned to the necessity of the case, but so that the whole was authenticated or dictated by the Holy Spirit with so full an influence, that it became truth without mixture of error, expressed in such terms as he himself ruled or suggested.

This, then, seems the true notion of plenary inspiration,—that for the suggestion, insertion, and adequate enunciation of truth, it was full and complete.

A.—All this seems to be clearly confirmed by the texts you have quoted ; and the advantages we enjoy from a volume having God for its immediate Author, cannot be too highly appreciated.

B.—True ; but have you considered how important and numerous those advantages are ?

A.—In part ; but I am an humble learner.

B.—Suffer me, then, briefly to suggest some of them. In the first place, we receive authentic information from it as to the early history of the world, on which human writings are either wholly silent, or filled with fables. We are thus enabled to discover the uniformity of those principles on which, both as individuals and as nations, men have been governed from the beginning of time ; all bearing their testimony to the wise, the holy, the just, and the merciful, administration of “ the Most High who ruleth in the kingdoms of men.” The history of the one true religion is presented in a connected view from the moment when the fall of our first parents placed our race in new relations to divine justice, and gave occasion to the first opening of the great scheme of our redemption, afterwards perfected by Christ, and now embodied in Christianity. The absolute darkness which must otherwise have rested upon the future condition of the world is dissipated by the prophecies contained in the sacred books, and which, where still unaccomplished, command our full belief from the fulfilment of so many of their predictions already in a manner strikingly exact, as witnessed by the records of history. All great points of morals are now settled by an authority from which there is no appeal, and we are delivered from those diversities of opinion and frequent contradictions on questions of right and wrong which perplexed the wisest among the Heathen. We now learn also, by declarations made by himself, on what terms, and by what means, the guilty may be reconciled to their offended God ;—we know that it is possible for us to be liberated from the degrading slavery of our sinful nature and

habits, by the renewal of that nature, through the mighty operations of the Holy Spirit ;—we have promises, confirmed by the most solemn acts of God, securing to us counsel, aid, and comfort, in the perplexities and afflictions of life ;—and, to crown the whole, a future state of felicity and glory is held out to us as the prize of our “ continuance in well-doing.” In a word, we have the confirmation of a divine, and therefore an infallible, authority for every thing in religion ; so that this is no longer left to the conflicting and doubtful opinions of man, most prone to err on a subject in which truth is the only thing of value ;—we have the authority of the infinitely wise and holy God for our opinions, our prayers, our trust, and our hopes.

A.—These are, indeed, invaluable advantages ; and I shall not fail to recur to them when, in again reading the history of ancient nations, I notice their ever-varying opinions on moral subjects ; their uncertainty as to the very fundamental truths of religion ; their superstitions ; and the various evils which human philosophy served but to increase and diffuse.

B.—Nor need you confine yourself to ancient nations. The history of Europe in the middle ages stands as a monument of the fatal effects, both as to religion and morals, which result from ignorance of the word of God. Among infidels of modern times, also, whilst we have seen nothing to justify their boast of the sufficiency of human reason, the most corrupting opinions as to morals, and, generally, that corresponding license in practice which has prevailed among them, give awful admonition to all, lest they reject “ the word of truth, the Gospel of their salvation.”

A.—Were the communications of the will of God to man committed to writing previously to the giving of the law ?

B.—The silence of the Bible on this point warrants us to conclude, that the first written revelation of God to man was that inscribed by the finger of God upon the two tables of stone which were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai ; nor did the same necessity exist previously, as the longevity of the antediluvians secured the accurate transmission of the traditional theology of more ancient times ; Methuselah having lived in the days of Adam, and Noah in the days of Methu-

selah. From Noah to Moses, also, few persons interposed ; and several of these, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, were favoured with immediate revelations, and were inspired persons. This traditional history and religious knowledge was embodied by Moses in the Book of Genesis, as far as the Holy Spirit judged it to be necessary for our instruction ; and we learn from this book, what we should never otherwise have known,—the process of the creation of the world ; the occasion, manner, and immediate consequences, of the fall of our first parents ; the leading religious opinions of the first ages ; the manner in which the human race was preserved from total extinction by the general deluge ; and the origin of nations.

CONVERSATION III.

The Creation.

A.—AM I to understand, from the first verse of the book of Genesis, that this visible universe was created out of nothing? or, that the creation of which Moses speaks was the mere framing and disposing of the materials of the chaotic mass, as described in the work of the six days?

B.—The philosophers of antiquity almost universally believed in the eternity of matter; and therefore, when they speak of creation, mean only the disposition and arrangement of things previously existing; but in this particular we see one of the advantages of a revelation: For Moses is to be understood as declaring that the world was made out of nothing by the will and power of God, and has thus opened to our minds the most impressive view which could be given us of his almighty power.

A.—Does the original word used by Moses signify creation out of nothing?

B.—It signifies either the creation of the substance or form of any thing; but it is the uniform doctrine of the Old Testament, that the world was created out of nothing; and this is abundantly confirmed by the Apostle Paul: “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things that do appear;” (Heb. xi. 2;) that is, of things apparent, or from pre-existent matter. And when he says that we know this by “faith,” he means faith in the holy Scriptures; and intimates that our reason would not have been sufficient to deduce that fact, which appeared so utterly incredible to heathen sages, that, amidst all their conflicting opinions, they appear to have almost uniformly agreed, that the matter of which the world was formed was eternal.

A.—Truly I perceive how this doctrine exalts our views of the power of God; for, since we are taught that all things which are were once nothing, and that they were spoken into being by “the Word of God,” we may well exclaim, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

B.—And thus a foundation is laid for the unlimited and absolute trust of his creatures in him, which could not be exercised by those who admitted of an eternal rival subsistence co-existing with him, and tending necessarily, as they thought, to various disorders and evils, which the power of God itself could not control.

A.—I had not indeed conceived that this doctrine was so intimately connected with that entire trust in God which is so essential to the comfort and hope of creatures. I now see its importance. But what am I to understand by “the beginning,” in which God is said to have “created the heavens and the earth?”

B.—The beginning of time; for the moment that the heavens and the earth were created, time, as to this world at least, commenced. Time, as distinguished from eternity, is the measure of the duration of our world. In this concise manner, too, Moses expresses the eternity of God. Before time began he was in being, for by creating the heavens and the earth he gave birth to time itself; and before time began he, to use the lofty language of the Prophet, “inhabited eternity.” You have noticed, no doubt, the similarity between the introduction of the Book of Genesis, and the first verses of the Gospel of St. John?

A.—Yes; and when that Evangelist declares that “the Word” was “in the beginning,” and made all things, and that without him nothing was made, I must also understand that he asserts that the Word was pre-existent to all created things, because he was when they were not, and they were made by him.

B.—This necessarily follows; and also that he was not only pre-existent, but eternal; for St. John does not confine himself to the creation of the heaven and the earth, but speaks of the creation of “all things” by the Word, and asserts that

nothing created exists which was not made by him. With this agree the words of St. Paul: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. i. 16, 17.) If he is then before all creatures, he himself is uncreated; if he is before all time, he is eternal; and if he created all things out of nothing, then he is truly God.

A.—This indeed cannot be questioned by any who sincerely believe the Scriptures; but is not the work of creation attributed to the Father?

B.—It is; and also, in some passages, to the Holy Spirit; but yet, whilst it is in fact the work of the Triune God, on account of some mysterious and special personal activity on the part of the Son, it is emphatically called his work. The Father created "all things by Jesus Christ," says St. Paul; and as "the Spirit of God" is represented, in the Mosaic account, as moving "upon the face of the waters," each person in the adorable Trinity is in Scripture manifestly set before us as employing his agency in the production and arrangement of this goodly world. We ought all therefore to unite in giving glory to the great Three-One.

A.—This is indeed a plain manifestation of the three divine Persons in action; but do not critics deduce the mystery of a plurality of persons in the Godhead from some grammatical peculiarity in Moses's account of the creation?

B.—The word used by Moses, and by us translated God, is Elohim. This is a plural substantive, which here and elsewhere Moses joins to a singular verb. From this it is very reasonably supposed, that the inspired writer intended to intimate the Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead. This is, however, rendered indubitable by what follows in verse 26: "And God said, Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness." And the Old Testament furnishes more instances of a similar kind: "Let *us* go down and confound their language." "Whom shall I send, and who will go for

us?" which all the best expositors, ancient and modern, have considered as clearly declarative of a plurality of persons co-eval and co-eternal in the unity of the divine essence. "Of such a personality," says Bishop Horne justly, "Revelation informs us; it is that on which the economy of man's redemption is founded: What more natural, therefore, than that, at the creation of man, this form of speech should be used by the divine Persons? What more rational than to suppose that a doctrine, so important to the human race, was communicated from the beginning, that men might know whom they worshipped, and how they ought to worship? And it is a satisfaction for us to reflect, that, in this momentous article of our faith, we have Patriarchs and Prophets for our fathers; that the God of Adam, of Noah, and of Abraham, is likewise our God; and that when we adore him in three persons, and give glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we do 'as it was done in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.'"

A.—Has it not been said that this form of speaking may be in imitation of the style of a king, who says "we" and "us," when he speaks of himself?

B.—This is a very modern usage, and unknown among the ancients.

A.—Does Moses speak of the creation of any other part of the material universe than the earth, and the planetary system connected with it?

B.—His leading design was, doubtless, to speak particularly of the creation of the earth, and its inhabitants; and of our atmosphere or heavens, and those celestial luminaries which serve us for "signs and seasons, for days and years;" that is, for the natural, civil, and ecclesiastical division of time. But when he observes, in verse 16, "He made the stars also," he asserts that the sidereal heavens, immense as they are, and filled with vast bodies spreading through spaces beyond the power of numbers to calculate, were the work of the same almighty power and infinite wisdom.

A.—And created at the same time?

B.—This is not explicitly affirmed. If we understand the words in direct connexion with the former part of the verse, then the sidereal heavens were made on the fourth day ; but if we consider them as a parenthesis designed to guard the doctrine that all the parts of the vast universe had their origin from the same creative fiat of Jehovah, they determine nothing as to the time of their creation. The former, however, appears to me the better interpretation.

A.—Are we then to suppose that God remained alone from eternity until this world was made ?

B.—And if you were to suppose worlds brought into existence many millions of ages before ours, would there not then be a previous eternity in which nothing existed but God ?

A.—That I did not advert to ; but still, may we not infer from Scripture that angels existed before man ?

B.—No doubt ; but we were not speaking of angels, who are “ spirits ;” but of material worlds.

A.—Suppose you that these distant stars are inhabited by rational and accountable creatures ?

B.—I have no very decided opinion on that subject. They may be the residences of unfallen and happy beings ; or they may answer other purposes in the vast scheme of creation, of which we now know nothing. They are to us stupendous monuments of God’s power ; and they may be designed for the residence of beings to be in future created, and perhaps instructed in the great principles of their interest and duty by a revelation of the whole moral history of this world, when it shall have been completed.

A.—How could that benefit them ?

B.—If our creation and redemption have made a most illustrious and peculiar display of the perfections of God, and especially of his moral attributes ; and if the moral of this world’s story goes to establish by action and example—the most impressive manner in which truth can be taught—the folly and hopelessness of rebellion ; and that submission to God is the highest interest of the creature ; do you think that the knowledge of such a history as the wondrous dealings

of God with the race of man presents, and will present more perfectly when “the mystery of God shall be finished,” will not be important to them, and may not contribute powerfully, perhaps effectually, to their preservation from sin ?

A.—This indeed I can well conceive ; but does it not appear incongruous that these vast bodies should exist several thousand years without inhabitants, and yet, as we are told by philosophers, as to some of them, have all the furniture of habitable worlds ?

B.—Even this is not quite clear ; it is not, for instance, fully demonstrated that the moon has an atmosphere. But allowing that they are habitable, have not many places upon this globe been uninhabited for several thousand years ? and yet does not the sun shine, and the clouds rain, and rivers flow, and vegetation flourish, in regions where the foot of man never trod, or at least till in very recent times ? Here, then, are instances of adaptation for receiving inhabitants where no inhabitants are yet found ; countries which have been waiting for ages to be peopled. But remember I lay no stress on any opinions of this kind, since God has not been pleased to gratify our curiosity. If, however, infidel philosophy, as you know, would reprove us for presumption, in thinking that our world, which is so little, and but one among a countless many, should have been so favoured by God, that he gave his Son to redeem its fallen inhabitants, we may, on the other hand, feel satisfied that the hypothesis I have hinted at has in it no improbability ; and that, as it assumes the whole universe to be no older than our globe, the effects of the stupendous dispensations of God to mankind may be felt through all its parts in the salutary information they may convey to all other rational creatures, yet to be brought into being, on moral subjects, and may be extended by revelation to all worlds, although this alone has been the subject of redeeming grace. That the instructive, though not the redeeming, benefits of Christianity extend to some beings superior to, and distant from, men, is clear from the words of St. Paul : “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly

places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

A.—I have, indeed, after hearing of the number of worlds which revolve in the starry heavens, and their countless inhabitants, as stated in philosophic books, been sometimes startled with the thought, that this speck of earth and its tiny inhabitants could scarcely be thought the object of a divine care so special and tender.

B.—But suppose all these countless multitudes of other beings to exist, were you never reproved for this surmise by the words of the heathen poet, quoted by St. Paul, " We are his offspring ;" and surely not the less beloved because he may have a very numerous family besides ? Granting, too, that those unstained worlds which glitter in the depths of space are filled with innocent beings, were you never reminded of the touching parable of our Lord ? " What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which was lost until he find it ? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing."

A.—Certainly I ought to have thought on words which so affectingly teach God's universal love to the creatures he has made, and to those especially who most need his compassion ; and also that the number of happy beings, however great, can never render him insensible to the misery and danger of the few, however small.

B.—You will also often find, under the affectation of science, a great degree of ignorance and presumption. We have instances of this in the would-be philosophers of the class you have spoken of, who insinuate that man is an insignificant being, because the universe may be filled with rational creatures ; and that he is the less cared for by God on that account. For do you not see, 1. That man remains just what he is, however you may multiply the number of other beings ? He has the same wants, capacities, fears, and hopes ; he is still an immortal creature, and an heir of everlasting happiness or misery. All these circumstances remain unaltered ; and a being with such attributes and hopes, and capacities and

destinies, can never be reduced to insignificance. 2. That this philosophy supposes, that, in proportion to the number of God's creatures, he must either be perplexed with their concerns, or become indifferent to each individual ; as though a father's affections must necessarily be weakened according to the number of his children. Thus, under the pretence of exalting the greatness and glory of God, they dishonour him by their unworthy notions, and afford another illustration of St. Paul's words, “ Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”

CONVERSATION IV.

Subject of Creation continued—The Sabbath—The Fall of Man.

A.—As the earth appears to have been at first created in a state of rudeness and disorder, may we suppose any long period of time to have elapsed before the work of the six days commenced?

B.—Some time certainly did intervene between that act of God by which the earth was created out of nothing, in the state described by the clause, “And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the great deep,” and the creation of light, which was the first step towards its being disposed and prepared as a habitable world. But whether the creation of the heavens and the earth in this dark and unformed state was a part of the first day’s work, cannot with any great certainty be determined from the narrative of Moses. It would do no violence to that account to suppose that the earth remained for a considerable time in the state in which it was created, at least as to its surface, whatever changes might be going on in the interior of it. Nor would this make any difference as to chronology, since Moses manifestly fixes the era of the creation of the world at the first day, when light was created; for before that there could be no day or night, or, in other words, no distinction of time. But why did you ask that question?

A.—Because geologists seem to require more time for the production of their primitive formations by natural process, than the chronology of the world allows.

B.—That science is too imperfectly known to be the basis of any very confident argument; and the formations which they would account for by natural process, might be at first effected supernaturally; or there might be circumstances then existing to render natural processes, if such they were, much more rapid than they assume them to have been.

A.—Does Moses speak on such subjects with philosophical accuracy ?

B.—Since he does not profess to teach natural philosophy, he would naturally use the terms and adopt the common notions of his day with respect to natural phenomena, or he would not have spoken intelligibly. His philosophy as to the creation has, however, more accuracy than at first might appear.

A.—Will you favour me with an instance ?

B.—He speaks of the creation of light before the sun, at which infidels in their ignorance and presumption have sometimes scoffed. Had he not been inspired he would not in this instance probably have so far contradicted popular notions, since no indication contrary to the notion that the sun is the original source of light appears to vulgar eyes. He, however, calls the sun and moon by a term which signifies “ bearers,” or “ instruments, of light ; ” and gives to light an independent existence, which is now admitted to be philosophically accurate.

A.—I remark a difference between the account of the creation of man and that of all other beings, in the solemn manner in which that act was commenced : “ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

B.—This difference is most instructive to us. It marks the superior excellence and importance of the being to be brought into existence ; the only creature of all with which the earth had been filled, that was made in God’s image ; and under whose dominion all other things were to be placed. He too was the only being capable of knowing the Author of his existence, of recognising the wisdom, power, and goodness displayed in the perfect and beauteous world which had been formed ; of holding intellectual and grateful intercourse with him ; and whose powers were capable of being heightened and indefinitely exalted by that intercourse. But have you also remarked, in reading this account, that only a part of this wonderful being was formed, like the other animals, out of the matter of the earth ?

A.—I have ; for “ the Lord God formed man,” that is,

the body of man, “out of the dust of the ground; and” then, by a subsequent act, “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” I wish to know whether the life here spoken of was animal life.

B.—Life indeed, in its lower principle, is a great and mysterious phenomenon, “a wonderful and ever-active power, which in some sort equally pervades animals and vegetables, a fleeting and evanescent energy, which, unseen by the eye, untraced by the understanding, is only known by its effects; and upon the failure of which the individual frame ceases, the organs lose their relative connexion, the laws of chemistry, which have hitherto been controlled by its superior authority, assume their action, and the whole system becomes decomposed and resolved into its primary elements.”* This principle was at this moment attached to the organized frame of man lying prostrate and motionless upon the ground, out of which it had been formed; but that something much higher than the impartation of mere animal life is to be understood by the act of breathing into man “the breath of life,” may be inferred from the consideration, that the animal life in man is nothing superior in principle, or even in its effects, to that enjoyed by many of the inferior animals; and yet they received it at the moment of their creation, when no such act as that of breathing it into them is ascribed by Moses to the Creator. Had man been a mere animal, there seems no reason why he should not have received animal life in the same manner as they received it; and if we see here, that he becomes not merely a living body, but “a living soul,” by the breathing of God upon him, we are led from the earthly origin of the body of man, to the immediate impartation, from his Maker, of a living, spiritual, and immortal principle, joined with, and pervading, commanding, and sustaining his corporeal frame; which principle we call the human soul.

A.—Have we any evidence of the existence of an immaterial principle in man, independent of the testimony of the word of God?

* Dr. Good.

B.—The doctrine of Scripture in this respect is confirmed by observation and reasoning. “ Two distinct classes of phenomena, namely, extension, divisibility, gravity, form, colour, attraction, repulsion, &c., and perception, memory, reasoning, joy, grief, &c., become known to us in radically different ways ;—the one, through the medium of the external senses ; the other, by consciousness. Are these phenomena the qualities of the same substance ? Is it reasonable to suppose that properties so opposite to each other, the knowledge of which is obtained in so different a manner, inhere in the same permanent subject ? If the qualities are thus essentially different, must not the essence be essentially different ? The argument is, however, but partially developed. Some of these qualities are incompatible with each other, so that, like length and shortness, when the comparison is with the same objects, they cannot possibly be the qualities of the same substance. Sensation and thought belong to one of the classes of properties which have been specified ; divisibility is included in the other. If sensation and thought were properties of matter, they must be divisible, because matter is divisible ; every separate particle of the thinking and feeling whole must possess a separate portion of sensation and thought. But sensation and thought are not divisible, our consciousness being judge ; the permanent subject, therefore, of which these are the qualities, is certainly not material.” *

A.—This is to me an argument at once plain and convincing ; but, to proceed with my inquiries. I find that Moses not only marks the eminence of the seventh day, or Sabbath, by stating that God rested on that day from his works, but that “ God *blessed* the seventh day, and *sanctified* it.” What am I to understand by this ?

B.—By blessing the day, is to be understood the consecration of it to the religious use of man ; that thus it might become the instrument of conveying special blessings by those acts of religious meditation and worship which were to be more formally and fully exercised on that day, and by which man

was graciously allowed to hold a more intimate intercourse with his Maker. It was therefore sanctified, or set apart from common uses, that is, from the ordinary employments of life, for these holy engagements alone ; and it was designed not only for the benefit of the first man, but to establish a weekly commemoration of the creation of the world by God to the end of time, and to give leisure to all men for the exercise of those acts of worship by which they might draw near to God, and receive his blessing. Thus you learn, that the observance of a Sabbath was not first enjoined at the giving of the law of Moses ; but was instituted at the creation of the world, and became obligatory upon all the posterity of Adam, whether Jews or Gentiles, and a pledge of the kindness and good-will of God to them. You may remark, too, that if the religious observance of one day in seven was necessary to man in his state of innocence, that he might be called from the lighter employments of dressing and keeping the garden, when no cares of life oppressed his mind, and no corrupting examples were near him ; it is much more necessary for us to be carefully observant of that sacred day, who are in so much the greater danger of forgetting God through the influence of the manifold anxieties of life, and the more powerful circumstances of temptation in which we are placed. You will not omit to notice also that that day was not made a day of rest only, but a hallowed, a sanctified day ; which can only mean, that it was set apart for religious services, to the exclusion of every other ; and that it is therefore to be regarded not so much as a restraint put upon man, as a grant made to him of a specially gracious character. We are therefore never to regard this institution as a weariness, like the corrupt Jews reproved by the Prophet ; but to call “ the day of the Lord honourable, full of delight ; ” and with joy bring into his house the offerings of our praise, and there celebrate at once our creation and redemption.

A.—How is it that we now observe the Sabbath on the first day of the week, and not on the seventh ?

B.—This change of the day is to be traced up to the age of the Apostles, and must therefore be referred to their

inspired authority. The first day of the week had this honour put upon it, as being the day of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. The substance of the law of the Sabbath, as found in the law of the ten commandments, which the Apostles repeatedly declare to be still obligatory upon Christians, is the observance of one day in seven: The day itself is a circumstance; but even this circumstance was not left to private individuals to determine. The Sabbath was ordained for public as well as private worship, and it was necessary that it should be observed by the whole community at the same time. The divine legislator of the Jews therefore specially directed that the first Sabbath kept in the wilderness should be calculated from the first day on which the manna fell; and among Christians apostolic authority fixed it upon the first day of the week, and gave it the expressive appellation of "the Lord's day."

A.—Why is the term "Lord" printed in capital letters, as I perceive it is in Gen. ii. 4, and frequently, although not uniformly, throughout the Scriptures of the Old Testament?

B.—In the passage you refer to, this name of God occurs for the first time; and it is there, and in all other places in which it occurs in capital letters, a translation of the original word Jehovah, which was reckoned by the Jews the most sacred of the names of God. It implies self-existence, independence, and eternity, and signifies one that has being in and of himself.

A.—Was the prohibition respecting the fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," the only law under which man was placed in Paradise?

B.—The epitome of the law of God as given both in the Old and New Testament, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself," is doubtless the sum of all moral law, and contains in principle all particular commands or duties. This law, founded upon the natural relations of creatures to their Maker, and upon his just claims, his wisdom and his benevolence, may be concluded to be the law of all intelligent and accountable

beings. It was the law therefore of man in Paradise ; for who can doubt whether he was not bound to love God supremely ? Obedience, however, is the test of love, and therefore it was necessary to institute a test of obedience. Every particular law of God is our test, and some other particular laws might be given to Adam ; but the great test which divine wisdom was pleased to adopt, was the prohibition you have mentioned ; and much as it has been the subject of unhallowed scoffing by wicked men, it was one which had an obvious fitness to the condition and circumstances of man.

A.—How does this appear ?

B.—Because, since it was determined by the wisdom of God to place man in a state of trial, and to make his continuance in the divine favour to depend upon his obedience, this obedience was, by such a prohibition, put more perfectly to the test than we can conceive it to have been by any other simple injunction. It was a prohibition at once adapted to guard him against the two chief sources from which only we can conceive that evil could approach him,—the dominion of sensual appetite, and intellectual pride. The fruit of the tree was pleasant to the eye, and therefore inviting to the senses, which it was an essential part of his duty to keep under subjection to his higher and governing intellectual nature ; and the tasting of it held out an increase of knowledge by means unauthorized, or rather forbidden ; and therefore, in order to obey, it was necessary that he should humbly submit to receive that degree of wisdom which God was pleased he should attain by immediate communion with himself, and the use of those means which he had appointed. He who perfectly preserves his senses under control, and maintains his reason in a state of humble subjection to God, cannot sin ; and this test called man's virtue into exercise in both respects.

A.—I now see its wisdom. But how could creatures so perfect as our first parents be liable to temptation ?

B.—Perfection in creatures is all relative. Absolute perfection belongs to God alone, and he is therefore the only Being who “ cannot be tempted of evil.”

A.—How am I then to understand that man was created “in the image of God?”

B.—The image of God in man is natural and moral. Our likeness to him in immateriality, intelligence, and immortality, constitutes the natural image of God in man. The moral image consisted in “knowledge,” rightly employed, “righteousness, and true holiness.” (Col. iii. 10.) Thus man was made a rational and immortal spirit, with no limit to the continual enlargement of his powers, had he legitimately exercised them. He was made holy and happy, and admitted to intercourse and vital union with God. He was placed in a world of grandeur, harmony, and beauty, canopied with other worlds, to exhibit the vastness of space, and the power and majesty of the Creator; whilst the immediate objects which surrounded him in Paradise were calculated to call forth reason, taste, and devotion into the most salutary and felicitating exercise; yet, notwithstanding all this, there was, by the appointment of God, and the constitution of his nature, a liability to sin.

A.—How, by the constitution of his nature?

B.—I answer in the words of a learned Prelate, “that in this compound nature of ours, there are several powers and faculties, several passions and affections, differing in their nature and tendency, according as they result from the soul or the body; that each of these has its proper object, in a due application to which it is easy and satisfied; that they are none of them sinful in themselves, but may be instrumental of much good when rightly applied, as well as occasion great evil by a misapplication; whereupon a considerable part of virtue will consist in regulating them.”* That man was created with such appetites and passions as were capable of excess, and therefore required this regulation, is clear from the account of Moses; and the preservation of innocence therefore demanded vigilance. No creature can be absolutely perfect, because it is finite; and it would appear that an innocent, and, in its kind, a perfect rational being, is kept from falling only by “taking hold” on God; and as this is an act

* Stillingfleet.

of desire and trust, there must be a determination of the will to it ; and so when the least carelessness, the least tampering with the desire of forbidden gratifications is induced, there is always an enemy at hand to make use of the opportunity to darken the judgment, and to accelerate the progress of offence. This is the scriptural account of the matter : “ So when desire hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

A.—Will creatures, then, since they will be always finite, and therefore in this respect imperfect, always be liable to sin ?

B.—By no means ; it is a part of the gracious plan of God to reward those who pass through the trial of this present state, by placing them in his immediate presence, where the special communications of his grace, and the entire absence of all temptation and occasions of sin, will secure their felicity for ever. This Adam would probably have attained as the reward of his obedience had he been faithful ; and this we shall receive as the “ gift of God,” through Jesus Christ, if we believe in him, and “ endure to the end ” of our probationary state.

A.—Am I to understand that “ the tree of life ” was so called because its fruit was the food of man, and the means of sustaining life ?

B.—Not his common food ; for then it would not have been distinguished from the rest of the trees of the garden, which were all, with the exception of the tree of knowledge, given to man for his daily sustenance.

A.—Was it then so called because its fruit was medicinal, and tended, by a natural virtue, to maintain the body in perpetual health and life ?

B.—This is not improbable : But what we know certainly is, that its fruit was in some way connected with man’s life ; because the reason given for man’s expulsion from the garden was, “ Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.” This is all we are explicitly taught. It is right, however, that I should inform you that some pious and eminent Divines have thought that

the tree of life was a kind of sacramental element ; a sign to man of that covenant by which life was promised to constant obedience ; and that the eating of it by our first parents was a religious act, expressive of their trust and hope in the promise of that eternal life of which it was the pledge. Certain it is, that it bears a mystic character in the allusions so frequently made to it in the holy Scriptures ; and in the book of the Revelation to St. John, it appears as an emblem of Christ, the source and pledge of immortality to us. You must, however, learn always to distinguish between what is explicitly stated in the holy Scriptures, and necessary, and probable inferences. The two former only demand our full assent ; the latter claim it only according to the degree of their probability.

CONVERSATION V.

Permission of Evil—Satanic Influence—First Promise—Sacrifices—Cherubim—Corrupt State of Man—Atonement—Tradition.

A.—So many important general doctrines appear to be involved in the account of the fall of man, that I must beg your patience while I detain you a little longer on that part of the Mosaic history. It is clear from the account itself, that the serpent was changed by the divine malediction from an animal of graceful form, and great sagacity, into a base reptile; and therefore the scoffs of infidels at the meanness of the instrument employed by Satan are as misplaced as they are profane, since they know not what the serpent was originally: But I have often wondered why an evil spirit should have been permitted to seduce man to sin, and to effect so sad a change in a world which God had so lately pronounced “very good.”

B.—And the reasons of his permission will not in the present state be unfolded to us. You must feel that you are not a proper judge of the vast plans and deep counsels of God, which reach to all creatures, and extend through time into eternity.

A.—Yes; and I feel also, that the only safe and satisfactory mode of proceeding with the Scriptures, is, first, to satisfy myself that they are from God, of which the evidence is abundant, easily comprehended, and fully convincing; and then thankfully to receive the truth they contain, leaving it to God to choose the best time and manner of explaining what is still mysterious.

B.—This is not only a safe and pious principle, but let it be impressed upon your mind, that it is the only rational one. Were God now to reveal to us all that our capacities could receive of his plans and counsels, there would be mysteries still, the reasons of which we could not comprehend; and

if it be proper now to reject that which is taught us because there is something still that we cannot comprehend, it would be equally proper then ; and so this sceptical principle would keep us from receiving any truth for ever, and place the creature in a ceaseless struggle, not only with its Creator, but with its own finiteness. The true wisdom of the principle you have laid down is therefore as conspicuous as its humility and piety. But pray tell me why a parent often refuses to give an answer to a child who asks him why he does this, or declines doing the other ?

A.—I suppose, because the child would not, in many cases, understand the reason of his conduct, for want of an acquaintance with many other things which are above his capacity.

B.—Just so, in order to judge of many things which God does, or permits others to do, it would be necessary for us to know many other things ; a number, indeed, far greater than our present powers are adequate to, or our circumstances in the present life would permit us to be instructed in. With what God has been pleased to reveal, and in the degree in which he has seen proper to reveal it, we have to do in this present life. The account of the fall, for instance, makes us acquainted with a fact which deeply concerns us, although the reasons of it are not fully explained.

A.—Do you refer to the doctrine, that it is one of the circumstances of human probation to be liable to diabolical influence ?

B.—I do. Man in his state of innocence was exposed to the subtlety and malice of the devil ; and this is the condition of his fallen descendants. We are placed under a scheme of recovery and salvation ; but he who was “a liar and a murderer from the beginning” now seeks to darken our judgments by various errors, and to destroy our souls by so engaging our hearts in worldly cares and pleasures, that we may neglect the “great salvation” of the Gospel.

A.—The very existence of a being of unmixed wickedness employed in tempting us to sin and destruction, appears incredible to some.

B.—Yet there are certain facts which they cannot deny.

We have among ourselves men who, by a long course of vice, appear to be wholly abandoned of God and goodness, and make, at least, fearful approaches to the character of beings of unmixed and unalleviated wickedness ; and it is also common for persons of this depraved character to apply themselves sedulously to the seduction of others, and especially to the corrupting of youth ; as though, like Satan, they envied innocence, and could not rest until they have withered every paradise to which they approach. There is nothing more incredible in the character ascribed to Satan in Scripture than in this obvious fact.

A.—Is Satan present in every place, that men are exposed to his temptations ?

B.—Omnipresence is one of the peculiar attributes of Deity ; but Satan is called “ the Prince of the devils ; ” dominion is ascribed to him ; the evil spirits over whom he rules are numerous, active, sleepless, unwearied ; and if there be, as it seems intimated in various passages of Scripture, a system of invisible agency, organized against the plans of God, and the peace and salvation of man, under this chief and prince, then he may be said to be present every where by himself, or by his agents.

A.—How shall we account for this subjection of many evil spirits to one ?

B.—Partly from his superiority of intellect ; partly on the same principle as that which leads the most wicked men often to combine under leaders to effect purposes gratifying to their passions, and implicitly to obey their chiefs. Of the laws of the invisible state we, however, know little ; but enough is revealed to put us upon our guard ; to urge us to fly to Christ for constant succour ; and to make us “ sober and vigilant.”

A.—I know that this power, though formidable, is not irresistible.

B.—True ; and he who conquered man in his strength shall be conquered by man in his weakness, if only he trust in the promised aid of Him who has “ bruised the serpent’s head.”

A.—Your last quotation leads me to ask how that expression is to be understood.

B.—You must consider the circumstances in which man was placed by sin. He became liable to death, as to the body; spiritual life, on which his holiness depended, was extinguished by that separation from God which wilful sin instantly effects; and he was adjudged to death in the sense of eternal punishment.

A.—How does it appear that future punishment was included in the penalty attached to disobedience?

B.—From the uniform tenor of Scripture; and in particular, from the general principle laid down, as a kind of axiom, by St. Paul: “The wages of sin is death;” by which, as we see from his argument, he means more than the death of the body. “In the day” man sinned this sentence would have been executed in its full extent, but that God had prepared a dispensation of grace and mercy, into which he was immediately received. His life was therefore spared, and the pardon of his offence was offered him through a Saviour who had been provided from “before the foundation of the world;” and who, even whilst man was receiving the sentence which doomed him to labour, sorrow, pain, and bodily death, was exhibited to his faith as the “Seed” of the woman. This illustrious “Seed,” or offspring of the woman, was to sustain a temporary injury by the bruising of his “heel,” which is a figurative representation of the temporary sufferings of our Lord: And he was to bruise the serpent’s “head;” that is, according to the same figurative manner of speaking, to inflict a fatal blow upon his power and dominion over mankind.

A.—Do you suppose that our first parents, and the antediluvian Patriarchs, so understood this first promise of a Redeemer?

B.—They had not views so clear, as to the full import of this promise, as we who live under the light of the Christian dispensation; but there were several most important and interesting truths which they could not but deduce from it.

A.—Be kind enough to point them out.

B.—They must have had very lofty views of the character

of Him who should be able to destroy the dominion of that malignant spirit, whose subtlety and power they and the whole earth had so painfully and so recently experienced. They could scarcely consider this victorious personage as merely human, although he was to be born of woman ; and if so, this early promise contained in itself an intimation of the incarnation of a divine Deliverer, of his voluntary, and therefore vicarious and sacrificial, sufferings for man's sake, and of the consequent moral liberation of man from the polluting influence of Satan, as well as from all other consequences of that transgression which he, by his wiles, had introduced into the world. There were also probably, in that age of frequent sensible intercourse with God, several explanatory and additional revelations on a subject which respected the great basis of man's **religious** hope and comfort. From this time, at least, we see that the Deliverer, thus promised, became the grand object of faith to good men, and by that faith they were saved. From that time, too, the rite of sacrifice commenced, which was typical of the true sacrifice of Christ ; and the notion of the vicarious and expiatory nature of the temporary suffering to be endured by the Seed of the woman, and its connexion with man's deliverance from the power of Satan, must have been as early as the institution of typical sacrifice.

A.—Were sacrifices then of divine appointment ?

B.—That they were so, might be inferred from the difficulty of conceiving how else so remarkable a practice could have originated, or could have been invested with so sacred a character ; but the case is made clear by God's visible acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, which was expressive of his faith in the efficacy of the death of the future Redeemer ; and by his rejection of Cain's offering, which was not a sacrifice, but an oblation of the fruits of the earth, and was not therefore, like that of Abel, an act of faith in the future Christ.

A.—I suppose this instance determines the case, by implying necessarily, that to approach God by sacrifice was the instituted mode of worship in the first family.

B.—Yes ; and God's visible acceptance of the animal

sacrifices of Abel, presented in faith, set the seal of divine authority upon that rite, to future ages.

A.—What may the placing of cherubim and a flaming sword at the gate of paradise, to keep the way to the tree of life, signify?

B.—We learn from this the fact, that the garden of Eden continued to exist for some time after man's fall; how long is not stated, but, as a great point of public instruction was thereby symbolically represented and enforced, probably for a considerable period, perhaps to the flood. But before you can understand the import of this flaming symbol, which consisted of a sword-like pointed flame, turning every way, placed between two glorious angels of the higher order, called cherubim, you must clearly understand the condition to which sin had reduced our first parents and all their posterity.

A.—I have been taught that the nature of man became wholly corrupt and sinful: Am I to understand this in its strongest sense?

B.—Most certainly; for when you consider the evils which have in all ages abounded in society, you must conclude that the fountain is most corrupt from which they flow, which fountain is the heart of man. Nor is there any exception. Wherever men have been found upon earth, whether existing in large states, or in sequestered and insulated communities, as in the distant islands of the Pacific Ocean, the same vicious dispositions and habits have been found predominant among them.

A.—I have read, in books of travels and voyages, of the simple and virtuous character of some of these islanders, and of the inhabitants of other parts of the world also.

B.—But a better acquaintance with these people has refuted all these stories, which were written under the first impressions of voyagers, and from very partial observation. Some of these uncivilized people are more timid, and apparently mild, than others; and in comparison with the wild and ferocious savages, often met with by persons making distant voyages of discovery, would appear to advantage. But the inhabitants of the South-Sea Islands have been found so

detestably wicked, that in the island of Otaheite, before Christianity began to exercise its influence upon them, the country was in a course of rapid depopulation through wars, murders, human sacrifices, and the intemperance of the inhabitants. The external appearance of the Hindoo is submissive and mild ; but falsehood, cruelty, and sensuality are the universal characters of the swarthy millions who people the plains of Hindostan. But do you not recollect the testimony of Him who perfectly "knew what was in man," as recorded in his own word ?

A.—I recollect that our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

B.—And since he uses that as an argument to prove the necessity of our being born of the Spirit ; that is, of our being regenerated and made holy, in order to our being admitted into the kingdom of heaven ; it proves that, in the state in which we are born into the world, we are so corrupt as to be wholly unmeet for heaven. St. Paul, you will also recollect, uses similar language when he speaks of all those who are not under the renewing influences of the Gospel as being "in the flesh ;" and declares, that their moral corruptness is so absolute, that "they cannot please God ;" that "the carnal mind is enmity to God," and "cannot be subject" to his law ; and that "the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God," neither "can discern them."

A.—Certainly, the scriptural proof of the total corruption of our nature is most decided.

B.—And do you not see in the correspondence between this doctrine of holy writ, and universal experience, a strong confirmation of the truth of the Bible ?

A.—I see the correspondence you mention, but I do not clearly see the argument.

B.—Consider then that the Bible assumes in every page, that men are in the same fallen state throughout all the earth. The history of the fall of man accounts for this fact, which, on any theory not admitting the descent of all nations from a common stock, and the transmission of a fallen nature from the first pair to their descendants, could not be accounted for.

But then neither of these circumstances could have been known to Moses or the Patriarchs but by inspiration. For how could they otherwise have known that in some distant, and then unknown, part of the earth, another primitive pair might not have been created, from whom an innocent race of human beings were then descending ? or how, that every child of Adam and Eve, to the end of time, should partake of their fallen nature as to moral qualities ? And if it be said that Moses at least knew that the nations of that part of the world in which he wrote were all descended from Noah, how could he know without revelation that the deluge was universal, when the most part of Africa and Europe, and all America and the Polynesian Islands, were utterly unknown in his day ? If a pure race of human beings had any where been found on earth, it would have been a direct contradiction to the Scriptures ; and that man is every where found in the moral state which the Bible describes, and which it assumes as the very foundation of human redemption, proves that it was inspired by God, because the certain knowledge of the fact was beyond the reach of man.

A.—I thank you for this argument ; and I think I see to what point you are leading me. Do you not, by referring me to the moral state of man, first, as an actual transgressor, and so under the sentence of eternal death ; and then as totally separated from the life of God, and therefore wholly corrupt and depraved ; intend to show that, but for an extraordinary display of God's mercy to him, he could not have been again brought within the hope of salvation ?

B.—That was my design. We have already seen that salvation was early promised through the voluntary sufferings of the woman's Seed ; and we know from St. Paul, that that Seed to whom all the Patriarchs looked forward was Christ. But we have other subjects in connexion with this great doctrine to consider : Why was it necessary that Christ should suffer for our redemption ?

A.—That he might satisfy the demands of the divine law, and render it consistent with the justice of God as the Governor of the world to forgive sin : but I wish to have this

further explained, in order that I may have clear views on a point infinitely important to me and to all.

B.—Recollect then that the law of God is “holy, just, and good;” that it exacts no more than what is right, and that it would not be right, and therefore impossible to God who is perfectly righteous, to require less; that the law is also holy and good, as well as just, and that therefore it would have been as contrary to God’s holiness and goodness, as to his justice, to have required less of his creatures. His true and gloriously perfect moral character could not have been manifested by any other law; nor could the order, holiness, and happiness of the intelligent creatures under his government have been provided for and maintained.

A.—To uphold the authority of this law, therefore, I presume, was essential to the character of God as universal Governor, and to the interest of his creatures.

B.—You are right; but you must also perceive that the authority of a law can only be maintained by the benefits it connects with obedience, and the dread of the penalties which it inflicts upon disobedience.

A.—Just so.

B.—And also that the infliction of a penalty upon criminals which has once been wisely and righteously attached to the violation of a law, is imperative upon a lawgiver.

A.—Certainly, or it ought not to have been threatened.

B.—You must also see that if inflicted upon one, it ought to be inflicted upon all.

A.—This I acknowledge; for otherwise the law would not be impartial and equal.

B.—But if not enforced upon one, for the same reason all transgressors ought to escape its infliction.

A.—Truly so.

B.—But if the law had been enforced upon all men, since all have sinned, we must all have perished; and if it had been enforced against none, then this would have amounted to the repeal of the law, and the utter annihilation of the divine government; so that sin would have had no check, and the Governor of the world could neither have

been in reality, nor have appeared to us to be, righteous or holy.

A.—No, nor indeed good, because the true happiness of creatures consists in holiness ; and sin, even independent of direct punishment, is, and must be for ever, the source of disorder and misery.

B.—Mark then the infinite love, wisdom, and justice of God, all united in and glorified by the method of our redemption. The only-begotten Son of God was given to assume our nature ; to take our place as sinners liable to the penalty of death ; to suffer in our stead ; and to pay “the rigid satisfaction, death for death.” And as his divine nature, his personal character, as God-man, gave an infinite merit to his death, so it was accepted as a full compensation to divine justice, in the place of the personal punishment of the offenders themselves. You may see, too, the connexion of the whole with the great end you have mentioned,—the maintenance of the authority of the law of God, in which all creatures are interested, and the righteous character of the Lawgiver. Who can doubt the righteous character of God, since he forgives no sinner but in respect of the death of his own Son on his account ? Who can doubt that sin is infinitely hateful to him, and the object of his eternal displeasure, since, to wash away its guilt, it was necessary that the divine Son of God should shed his own most precious blood ? And who can doubt whether God will maintain the authority of his own law, since he exacted its penalty from him before pardon could be administered to those who had violated it ?

A.—Every thing, I clearly perceive, tends in the Christian scheme to maintain this dominion of the law of God ; since those who reject Christ are still left to its penalty, to be personally endured by them ; and those who embrace him are brought under a regenerating influence, by which they yield a cheerful obedience to it in this life, and in another shall be put into a state in which they shall obey it without the least deviation for ever.

B.—You have rightly conceived the case ; and let the love of God to you in the gift of his Son, and the generous love

of your Saviour, in taking the load of your sins, and bearing them in “his own body on the tree,” properly affect your heart. Fly to his atonement for refuge ; and as “you are not your own, but bought with a price, glorify your Saviour in your body and spirit, which are his.” But we must return to the point from which this digression diverged.

A.—You were speaking of the cherubim at the gate of Paradise as symbolical.

B.—From what has been said, you perceive that man can only be saved by an act of grace, and not of merit ; that if he plead his original rights to the divine favour and blessing as a creature, he has plainly forfeited them by his offences ; that if he meet God in the way of justice, he must receive according to his doings ; that is, he must bear the penalty of sin, which is death ; and that therefore he has no plea left but that of mercy, free and unmerited mercy, through the atonement made for his sins by the Son of God incarnate ; which method of salvation he is required to accept by acts of faith or trust in the sacrifice of Christ ; which faith was in those primitive times expressed by the oblation of animal sacrifices, prefiguring the offering of “the Lamb of God,” as we have seen in the case of Abel.

A.—All this I comprehend.

B.—Can you not, then, understand the symbol of the flaming cherubim, guarding the way to the tree of life ? Does it not clearly intimate to you, that life is now administered by a new and different institution ? and that if any man attempt to approach God, like the self-commend ing Pharisee in the temple, to claim life on the ground of personal merit and right, which was the principle of the Adamic covenant of works, he shall be met only by manifestations of divine wrath ? To all such “God is a consuming fire ;” and the sword of his justice, like a flame, turns every way, and forbids the administration of life to every sinner who confesses not his sin before the altar of his Redeemer’s sacrifice. The “new way” to life is opened ; the old one, as to man, is closed and guarded for ever.

A.—This, then, was probably the reason why this fearful

symbol was kept for some time visible before men ; that, being cut off from all other hope, they might present their typical sacrifices of atonement as Abel, with confession of their sin, and as acts of faith.

B.—And you see how much they needed this impressive symbolical instruction, since Cain appears to have questioned the doctrine of justification by faith in the promised Seed ; and, rejecting the atonement, sought acceptance through a mere ceremonial observance.

A.—When Cain complains of a part of his sentence, as driving him “from the presence of the Lord,” are we to understand that there was in the first ages a permanent manifestation of God, such as the Jews in after-ages called the Shechinah, or cloud of glory ?

B.—Perhaps not a permanent but an occasional one, in connexion with solemn acts of worship, and as a visible token of acceptance. Such tokens, we know, were in future times vouchsafed by voices, or by human and angelic appearances, or by fire consuming the sacrifices.

A.—Then you do not admit the notion of some, that the cherubim at the gate of Paradise marked the place where the antediluvian Patriarchs worshipped.

B.—And for this reason, that we read of another “presence” of God, as adverted to by Cain, and before which Abel seems to have presented his oblations. Besides, there was no manifestation of grace in the terrible spectacle exhibited at the gate of the garden ; and it is a confirmatory consideration, that where God afterwards fixed his residence among men for purposes of grace, the cherubim are represented, not under fearful, but mild and inviting, aspects. Thus cherubic figures were embroidered upon the veil which hung before the mercy-seat ; but not with flaming swords. Thus, also, they overshadowed the mercy-seat itself with their wings, and bent their faces towards it, as deeply interested in the dispensation of mercy to the guilty. They represent the whole order of angels ; who are become the ministers of the grace of God to man, wherever the atonement of Christ is set forth and acknowledged

A.—I see in this the force of St. Paul's interesting declaration, that the death of Christ has reconciled "things in heaven and things on earth," angels with men, and rendered them glad "to minister to the heirs of salvation." But allow me to inquire whether there were any traditions of the events mentioned by Moses, in his account of the creation and fall, among the early heathen nations?

B.—It is natural to suppose that these facts descended by tradition into other branches of the family of Noah, as well as into the Abrahamic branch; but you are to recollect that we have no heathen records extant near so ancient as the writings of Moses; and that long before the oldest of their writers lived, all the facts of the earliest history of man had been distorted by that vain, but ever fertile, and often monstrous, imagination which originated the idolatries and superstitions which every where prevailed. Still we see indications sufficiently strong of a common source from which all the heathen mythologies have been derived, and of a truth which the wickedness of man converted into bewildering and ridiculous, but, as taking the name and authority of religion, into fatal error.

A.—Were not the Golden Age of the classic poets, and the story of the Garden of the Hesperides, founded upon the tradition of the Mosaical Paradise?

B.—No doubt; but it may afford you some pleasure, if I give you instances from other sources. An ancient Egyptian book, ascribed to Thoth, says, "In the beginning there was a boundless darkness in the abyss; but water and an intelligent Spirit acted with divine power in the midst of the chaos." An ancient Phenician writer, a fragment of whose works has been preserved, makes "the principles of the universe to be a dark air, and a turbulent chaos." According to the ancient Persians, "God created the world at six different times." Among the Hindus, the Institutes of Menu are of very high antiquity; and in these is the following sublime passage, mixed up with many absurd fables: "This universe existed only in the first divine idea, yet unexpanded, as if involved in darkness. Then the sole self-existing Power, himself undiscerned,

but making the world discernible, appeared with undiminished glory, dispelling the gloom. He whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity, even He, the soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend, shone forth in person." Among the Chinese the tradition is, "that the heavens were first made; then the foundations of the earth were laid; the atmosphere was then diffused round the globe; and last of all man was created." Even in America we see the rudiments of the same traditions. The aboriginal Peruvians believed that, at the beginning of the world, a being named Con levelled mountains and raised hills by the breath of his mouth; that he filled the earth with inhabitants, giving them fruits and bread in abundance; but that, being offended with their transgressions, he afflicted their lands with the curse of sterility. The Satya age, or age of perfection, held by the Brahmins of India, plainly refers to the state of man in Paradise; and there is an ancient bas-relief in one of their temples, representing in one part an incarnation of one of their deities struggling with a huge serpent, and in another treading its head under his foot. The history of Cain and Abel also is found, a little altered, in an ancient Hindoo legend given in one of the volumes of the "Asiatic Researches: " "Brahmah, becoming incarnate, produced the first woman Satarupa, or Iva, out of one half of his body, and the first man Swayambhuva, or Adima, out of the other half. This pair had three sons; Carpama slew his brother Daesha, with a club, as he was performing a sacrifice: But Daesha had previously wished that he might always remain a vagabond on the face of the earth." It is remarkable, too, that the Iroquois, a savage nation of America, should have preserved a tradition of the same event. They believe that the first woman was seduced from her obedience to God; and that, in consequence of it, she was banished out of heaven; that she afterward bore two sons; that one of these attacked and slew the other; and that many children afterwards sprung from the same woman, who were the ancestors of all mankind. Many other instances have been collected by the researches of the learned; bu

these will suffice to show how strongly the leading facts of the first period of the world's story were impressed upon the minds of the descendants of Noah.

A.—Do not these instances prove that the traditions of the earliest events in human history among all nations had a common source? And does not this go far to confirm the Mosaic relation?

B.—Indubitably so; for if Moses, or any subsequent writer, had invented the account in the book of Genesis, how could he have made it agree with the traditions of India and America, of whose inhabitants he knew nothing? Another proof arises out of the languages of the earth, which were manifestly drawn originally from one tongue; which likewise agrees with the Mosaic account. The division of time into weeks, also, so generally adopted from the earliest time, can only be accounted for from the hallowing of the seventh day, as stated by Moses; since it is entirely an arbitrary division, and was not indicated, like months and years, by the revolutions of the moon and the earth. For days, and months, and years, are pointed out by the movements of the great clock of nature, the planetary system; but as it has no index for weeks, we can only refer this division of time to the institution of the Sabbath.

CONVERSATION VI.

Physical Varieties of Men—Ancient Church of God—Noah—The Deluge—The Ark—Prohibition of Blood—The Rainbow—Curse of Canaan.

A.—Has it not been argued from the difference of physiognomy and colour which obtains in the human race, that all nations cannot have descended from the same pair?

B.—It has; and at first sight it appears difficult to conceive how the gigantic Patagonian of seven feet in height, the dwarf Laplander of four; the fair-skinned native of the northern regions, and the dark African; the nicely-turned heads of Georgia, the flat skulls of the Charibs, and the depressed visage of the Tartar, could have issued from a common parentage. Yet the most eminent naturalists have demonstrated that all these are but varieties in the same race, produced by the effects of climate, different kinds of food, peculiar manners and customs, and morbid and hereditary affections. They prove this from the effect produced by several of these causes, taken separately or together, upon different animals. M. Blumenbach, the celebrated naturalist, has selected the swine genus for his proof, and has drawn from it a chain of argument the most convincing; though the dog or the sheep would have answered his purpose just as well. He has succeeded in showing that the swine genus, even in countries, as in America, where we have historical and undeniable proofs of its being derived from one common stock imported in modern times from Europe, exhibits in its different varieties distinctions not only as numerous and astonishing, but, so far as relates to the exterior of the animal, of the very same kind, as are to be met with in the different varieties of the human species, both as to hair, colour, shape of the skull, &c.

A.—Have not some attempted to account for the colour

of the negro race, by supposing that the mark set upon Cain was the changing of him into a black ?

B.—Yes ; this was once used by our slave-dealers as an argument to justify African slavery ; but they unfortunately forgot that all the descendants of Cain were destroyed by the flood ; and that Noah descended, not from Cain, but from Seth.

A.—What might that mark be ?

B.—Interpreters of Scripture, whose fault it often is not to be wise enough to confess their ignorance, have indulged in various fancies on this subject, any one of which has just as much evidence as another. All we can know is, that it was such a character as answered the two-fold purpose of being a visible sign of God's anger against his crime, and securing him from human vengeance. He was seen to be a man under the mark of God's displeasure, and thus human beings rather regarded him with horror and pity than with revenge. With this mark he departed to his exile to the land of Nod, or the low country, as it is supposed, of Susiana, or Chusistan.

A.—Several of his descendants are mentioned by Moses as inventors of tents, of musical instruments, and the art of working metals.

B.—And, as such, they are called “ the fathers ” of such as practise those arts, according to the Hebrew mode of speaking.

A.—Have we any notice of good men in those days forming themselves into a visible church of God, in distinction from the wicked and irreligious world ?

B.—Before the flood, as after, every family which had a pious head was probably a church of God, of which the father was the ruler and the Priest ; but when irreligion began to abound, as in the days of Enos the son of Seth, it is said, “ Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,” or, as it is better rendered in the margin, “ Then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord ; ” that is, they called themselves the servants and worshippers of the Lord, to distinguish themselves from such profane persons as had forsaken him.

A. This distinction will perhaps explain Gen. vi. 1, 2, where the “sons of God” are said to have intermarried with “the daughters of men.”

B.—It does ; and it shows us that, as from the beginning men were justified by faith, they who were thus justified were adopted into God’s family, and acquired the high title of “the sons of God,” as now. These intermarriages, however, showed the rapid deterioration both of the antediluvian church and the world at large ; and from those irreligious connexions, which passion and sense, unregulated by piety, dictated, the worst effects followed. The mound of distinction between the church and the world was thrown down, and the whole earth sunk into that awful state of irreligion and violence which is described by Moses ; so that after such a delay as gave to man space for repentance, and such warnings as illustrated the long-suffering of God, they were destroyed by the most terrible and universal calamity the earth has ever witnessed, a universal deluge of waters ; Noah and his house only escaping.

A.—Noah was “a righteous man.”

B.—Yes ; and you may see in him the true source of acceptable righteousness in all ages. His righteousness sprung from his faith.

A.—You suppose, probably, that there was much infidelity in the old world.

B.—This, with its consequent violence and wickedness, was its leading sin, rather than idolatry, of which we read nothing. There was probably less ignorance among the antediluvians than after the dispersion of mankind ; but intellectual pride uniformly generates unbelief. The translation of the pious Enoch was, no doubt, designed to demonstrate the existence of a state of future blessedness, and, by consequence, of future punishment ; both which we therefore conclude were to a great extent denied. From the same tendency to infidelity we may account for the disbelief of the antediluvians in the threatenings of God as to the flood denounced to them by Noah, who was a public Minister of God, and an inspired “Preacher of righteousness.”

A.—Contrasted with this general unbelief, the faith of Noah appears very illustrious.

B.—It was of that character which proves itself to be the work of the Spirit in the heart of man, and specially the gift of God; for he was not only “moved with fear” to prepare his ark, but he calmly rested in the promise of God for his preservation amidst the convulsions of nature, and the wildly tossing floods of a deluge which destroyed the whole race, and greatly changed the very structure of the earth.

A.—When St. Paul informs us that he became “heir of the righteousness which is by faith,” does he mean the same thing as when he says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness?”

B.—The same; for, as you will see that the temporal promises made to Abraham involved the promise of Messiah, so the ancient promise relative to “the Seed of the woman” was involved in Noah’s preservation; for if the whole race had been destroyed, that promise could not have been accomplished. The faith of Noah, like that of Abraham, is therefore to be regarded as terminating ultimately in Christ; and it is on this account that a justifying efficacy is attributed to it. Besides, God promised to establish his covenant with Noah, which covenant contained the promise of the great Deliverer.

A.—Have not some of our objectors questioned whether there is water sufficient in the ocean to cover the earth to the depth spoken of by Moses?

B.—Ignorance lies generally at the bottom of such objections, or at least bad men more thoughtlessly frame objections to the Scriptures than to any thing else,—a sufficient proof of their enmity to this holy volume. An eminent philosopher has, however, told them, that if all the water were precipitated which is held in solution by the atmosphere alone, it would probably cover the earth to the depth of above thirty feet. In addition to this we have the waters of the ocean.

A.—Where are the mountains of Ararat upon which the ark rested?

B.—Mount Ararat lies in 39 deg. 30 min. N. latitude, and 40 deg. 30 min. E. longitude, on the vast ridge of Taurus,

nearly midway between the southern extremities of the Euxine and Caspian seas. On his descent from Ararat, the Patriarch planted the vine ; and in the same neighbourhood excellent wine is still made. Olive-trees are also found in the vicinity ; and you recollect that the dove returned with an olive-branch to the ark.

A.—Are there not many natural proofs of a general deluge of waters ?

B.—They abound in every part of the earth. Stratified mountains, of different heights, exist in various countries, between whose strata various substances of marine, and some vegetables of terrestrial, origin repose, either in their natural state or petrified. The plains of the arctic circle are overspread with the shells of Indian seas, and with the bodies of elephants and rhinoceri, surrounded by masses of submarine vegetation ; all showing a mighty and general convulsion, truly called a breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, and the agency of rushing waters sweeping confusedly together the products of land and water. Cuvier, a great authority in geology, is of opinion that it is thoroughly established by philosophic investigation, “ that the crust of our globe has been subject to a great and sudden revolution, the epoch of which cannot be dated farther back than a few thousand years.”

A.—When it is said, that “ it repented the Lord that he had made man upon earth,” how am I to understand that and similar expressions ?

B.—Just as you understand those passages which ascribe hands and feet to the Most High. It is a mode of speaking after the manner of men ; and the noble and spiritual manner in which the Scriptures discourse of God, when they directly refer to his nature and perfections, will prevent every attentive reader from misinterpreting these figurative expressions taken from the bodily form or the mental feelings of human beings.

A.—I observe a distinction of clean and unclean, in the animals received into the ark.

B.—And this circumstance proves the early institution of animal sacrifices ; for as animals were not used for food

before the flood, the distinction of the clean from the unclean could only refer to the choice of such as had been declared acceptable to God as sacrifices, and used to typify the pure and spotless character of the great Oblation, “ the Lamb of God.”

A.—Do not many of the inquiries, as to the manner in which the animals preserved in the ark were collected by Noah, and how he embarked and sustained them, with some others of the same kind respecting the deluge itself, proceed upon a total forgetfulness of the agency of God ?

B.—This shows their folly ; for in the whole account, Moses represents the deluge as an event scarcely less vast and extraordinary than the creation itself, and as resulting equally from the almighty power of God. Almost every thing connected with it bears the stamp of miracle.

A.—But the building of the ark was the work of Noah.

B.—So it appears ; for miraculous power is never uselessly exerted : And many who were drowned in the flood might labour, under his direction, to erect this stupendous vessel ; just as many may assist in various ways to build the church of God, who will never be saved in it.

A.—This work shows Noah to have been a man of great mechanical skill.

B.—And to have had good artists and mechanics at command ; a presumptive proof of the high state of practical science, and of the arts, before the flood.

A.—Which knowledge Noah and his sons would introduce into what we may call the second world.

B.—And this proves the fallacy of those hypotheses, to which too many learned names have incautiously given their sanction, that the primitive nations rose gradually out of a rude, ignorant, and almost savage state, and acquired their knowledge by slow progress. They have amused themselves by tracing this process, as to language and the arts, from the simplest elements, wholly unmindful of the scriptural account, and of the fact of the rapid rise of nations, after the dispersion, distinguished for their rich and splendid architecture, which itself presupposes great scientific knowledge, as well as mechanical skill.

A.—They forget, too, the vast city and tower which was commenced before the dispersion. But, to return : Why was blood prohibited to Noah and his descendants when the use of animals for food was for the first time granted ?

B.—Because “ the blood is the life thereof,” and, as such, constituted the essential part of animal sacrifices ; atonement being made only with that. Blood was therefore a sacred, a devoted thing, and men were thus constantly reminded of that grand axiom in the government of God over fallen man, “ Without shedding of blood there is no remission : ” A principle which involves two doctrines which we ought never to forget,—that the guilty deserve death, and that they can only escape it through the death of the innocent. Thus their daily food was made prefigurative ; just as the same prohibition, extended to us by apostolic authority, renders our abstinence from blood commemorative of the great Sacrifice, who gave his life, his blood, for us.

A.—If there was rain before the flood, there must have been rainbows, since they are formed by the striking of the beams of the sun upon the opposite drops of falling rain.

B.—Perhaps it might be shown, that by a slight difference in the state of the atmosphere, or in the refrangible power of the drops of rain before the flood, no rainbow would be visible to those upon the common level of the earth, although there might be rain ; but the question is of no consequence, for the rainbow was “ set,” or appointed, as the token of God’s covenant. This sign was at once beautiful and appropriate ; for as it appears only in time of rain, at the falling of which, the minds of men who had so recently escaped the deluge might be disturbed, under the apprehension of a second flood, it quelled their fears. When the Jews behold the rainbow, they bless God ; a custom in which we should do well to imitate them ; and especially since the same sign, at once so mild and so majestic, not only assures us of preservation from the “ plague of immoderate waters,” and of the succession of seasons, but has become an evangelical symbol also. There was “ a rainbow about the throne,” both in the visions of Ezekiel and St. John ; the pledge to us of the retiring storm

of the divine anger, and the breaking forth of the light of his countenance. “ When thou lookest upon the rainbow, praise Him that made it ; very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof ; it compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it.” (Eccl. xlivi. 11, 12.)

A.—The intemperance of Noah is a great blot in the character of so distinguished a Patriarch.

B.—And the recording of the failings of good men in the Old Testament is a great proof of the veracity and honesty of the sacred writers. It is always to be remembered that these instances are not recorded as examples, but as admonitions, the moral of which is expressed by St. Paul in his own admirable manner : “ Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

A.—How does it appear that the prophetic malediction pronounced by Noah upon Ham, and the benediction of Shem and Japheth, have been accomplished ?

B.—They related chiefly to the posterity of each. As to Ham, the curse being laid upon Canaan his son, rather than upon himself, shows that it was limited to the Canaanites, and did not extend farther. These were subjected by the Israelites, the descendants of Shem ; and the Tyrians and Carthaginians who were also Canaanites, by the Greeks and Romans, the descendants of Japheth. The malediction was, however, prescient of their wickedness ; for until the iniquity of the Canaanites came to the “ full,” they were not subject to it. Joshua did not invade Canaan until eight hundred years after the delivery of this prophecy ; so slow is God to anger, and yet so mindful of his own word ! The blessing of Shem intimates that the Lord would be “ his God,” in a particular manner ; and, accordingly, the church of God was established for many generations among his posterity ; and of him, “ according to the flesh, Christ came.” The “ enlargement” of Japheth has been fulfilled by his descendants possessing “ all Europe, the Lesser Asia, Media, part of Armenia, Iberia, Albania, and those vast regions to the north, which anciently the Scythians inhabited, now the Tartars.” His

dwelling in the tents of Shem was fulfilled when the Greeks and Romans subdued Judea, and other countries of Asia belonging to Shem ; and more recently by the conquests of European powers in the east.

A.—The peopling of the earth by the descendants of Noah must be a valuable and curious part of the Mosaic history.

B.—As an historical record it is inestimable. It opens to us that impenetrable mystery,—the origin of nations ; for we should otherwise have been left to the fables of heathen writers, who profess to make us profoundly wise by the information that one nation sprung from stones, another from a tree, a third from dragons' teeth, and so on. Add to this, the investigations of the most learned men have served to confirm this account. Sir W Jones has satisfactorily traced the origin of all the people of the earth to the three roots, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

A.—May we learn from Moses, who was the first man who assumed sovereign power ? and which was the first kingdom ?

B.—Nimrod was the first man to whom kingly power is ascribed ; and he appears to have substituted a sovereignty acquired by vigour, boldness, and conquest, for the paternal or patriarchal form of government.

A.—Did he derive his appellation of “a mighty hunter,” from his hunting men, which has been the great employ of all celebrated conquerors ?

B.—From hunting animals ; but the heroes of antiquity were trained up in the chase, which, as practised in the east, and in those early ages, you must not confound with the exploits of our European gentry, who valiantly encounter a hare, a fox, or, at most, a stag. The tiger hunts of modern India are better pictures of the ancient venatical exploits of Nimrod ; and as formidable wild beasts were the animals to be destroyed, and that both for the safety of the inhabitants, and the extension of cultivation into the rude country infested with them, a hunting party was usually composed of considerable numbers of armed men. Among these, Nimrod, from his strength, activity, and courage, appears to have gained influence, and to have made use of it for the

purpose of collecting followers for the founding of an empire ; no doubt at the expense of the independence of many of the primitive tribes, who were thus coerced into submission. The Chaldean astronomers honoured his memory by placing him among the stars, where he still shines as the constellation Orion, at least upon your celestial globe, invested with the attributes of a huntsman. Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh are said to be “the beginning of his kingdom ;” but, not content with these, “he went out into Assyria,” as the margin reads it, which belonged to the children of Shem, and built the celebrated Nineveh, and by this conquest laid the foundation of the Assyrian empire.

A.—When the language of men was confounded, are we to understand that a number of totally new languages took the place of the one primitive tongue ?

B.—As this was unnecessary to accomplish the divine purpose, we may presume that nothing more was done than to produce a difference of pronunciation and dialect, which would render the different tribes as unintelligible to each other as those who speak French to those who only understand Italian or Spanish ; although all these arise out of the Latin.

A.—Was the primitive language lost ?

B.—This is the opinion of that great linguist, Sir W. Jones ; but others have disputed in favour of the Hebrew being the primitive language of mankind. All that we can say is, that it does not appear to have been necessary to destroy the original language in order to effect the purpose of the miracle, which was to oblige the people to disperse, when employed in building a great city and tower to prevent their being “scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.” For this reason it is probable that the primitive tongue continued to be spoken by some one nation.

A.—Then it was plainly the will of God, that men should form different states or political societies ?

B.—Clearly so ; and the means of accomplishing this was most effectual ; for, as the learned Mede observes, “the proper effect of the plurality of tongues is to sort men into a plurality of societies.”

A.—Was language originally a human invention, or taught to man by God?

B.—Adam in Paradise heard God speak in language, and he understood it. He must therefore have been endowed with that gift at his creation.

A.—I might have thought of that; but I was led to the question by remembering that I had somewhere seen a conjecture how men would begin to form language from its first elements.

B.—There have been theorists who have advocated the notion of the human invention of language. The most profound of these was the Abbé de Brosses; but even he confesses that men must have existed a long time, must have acquired general ideas, have formed themselves into societies, and have undertaken designs in common, before they could form regular words out of the inarticulate sounds and cries of nature.

A.—Surely this is most absurd; for how could they establish society, form laws, agree on forms of government, invent a common system of religion, and agree on the plans necessary to execute works in common, without any expressive medium of communication?

B.—This is only one among the follies of the wise when they would be “wise above what is written.” So that they often remind us of that passage: “They have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is there in them?”

CONVERSATION VII.

Call of Abraham—Abrahamic Covenant—Melchizedec—Ishmael—Burial-Places—Esau—Jacob—Blessing of the twelve Tribes.

A.—Do you not regard the call of Abraham as, after the creation, the fall of man, and the deluge, the next grand leading event in the history of Moses?

B.—So truly so, that Moses devotes to it nineteen chapters of the Book of Genesis. It demands your attention in various views.

A.—Is not the first, that it exhibits a picture of ancient manners?

B.—The most ancient picture of them; and although this is the lowest consideration under which it ought to be regarded, it is neither uninteresting nor uninstructive. Ur, of which Abraham was a native, was in the plains of Chaldea; Haran, or Charan, was to the westward; and here he received that divine injunction which he so implicitly, and in so noble an exercise of true faith, obeyed, to depart to a country which he knew not of, but which God promised to show him. The migrations of Abraham and his sons show the manner in which the earth was gradually covered with people. In those ages some cities had been built, and the country, to some extent about them, cultivated; but wide spaces of unoccupied land intervened between. A part of society following, therefore, the pastoral life, led forth their flocks, and, in large family tribes, of which the parent was the head, uniting both the sovereign power and the priesthood in himself, and with a train of servants attached to the tribe by hereditary ties, pitched their camps wherever a fertile and unappropriated district offered them pasture. A few of these nomadic tribes appear to have made the circuit of the same region, seldom going far from their native seats; which would probably have been the case with Abraham, had he not received the call

of God to depart to a distant country. Others, more bold, followed the track of rivers, and the sweep of fertile valleys ; and at length some built cities, and formed settlements in those distant regions ; whilst others, either from attachment to their former mode of life, or from necessity, continued in their pastoral occupations, and followed the supplies afforded for their flocks by the still-expanding regions of the fertile earth. Wars and violences, droughts, famines, and the constant increase of population, continued to impel these innumerable, but, at first, small, streams of men into still more distant regions. Those who settled on the sea-coasts began to use that element both for supplying themselves with a new species of food, and as a medium of communication by vessels with other countries, for the interchange of such commodities as their own lands afforded with those offered by maritime states, more or less distant. Thus were laid the foundations of commerce, and thus the maritime cities were gradually rendered opulent and powerful. Colonies were in time transported from them by means of their ships, and settled on the coasts of still more distant and fertile countries. Thus the migrations of the three primitive families proceeded from the central regions of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria ; and in succession they established far-distant communities ; the Phenicians, Arabians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Lybians, southward ; the Persians, Indians, and Chinese, eastward ; the Scythians, Celts, and Tartars, northward ; and the Goths, Greeks, and Latins, even as far as the Peruvians and Mexicans of South America, and the Indians of North America, westward.

A.—The modern pastoral Arabians appear to have preserved some features of the manners of the patriarchal shepherds.

B.—But without their intelligence and dignity. Abraham is seen as the sovereign, or *emir*, of his tribe ; but his rule is without tyranny or haughtiness, and his servants submit without servility. Although secondary wives were allowed, Sarah preserves her superiority of rank and authority over them ; and she is the companion of her lord, and shares his counsels.

There is no degradation of the wife observable. The religion, too, of the family is common to all; and the polite and courteous behaviour, of which instances often break incidentally through the narrative, exhibit refinement of manners, in interesting connexion with simplicity and pastoral occupations.

A.—You observed that these views, however interesting, were of inferior importance to others connected with the call of Abraham.

B.—This was a great moral event, designed to preserve the true religion, by special interposition, in one family, and to bear witness to it among other nations now rapidly sinking into fatal errors and base idolatries.

A.—God condescended to make a covenant with Abraham: What was the import of it?

B.—That he would bless him greatly; make him “the father of many nations;” which promise, as St. Paul teaches, includes his spiritual seed, as well as his natural descendants; that he would give to him and to his seed the land of Canaan, in which was included the promise of the heavenly inheritance, of which Canaan was, from that time, made the standing type to the faithful; that he and his posterity should be the people of God, or his visible church on earth; and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; which not only meant that he should have issue, and that the Seed of the woman, the Deliverer of man, for whom they looked, should be one of his descendants; but that all nations, believers of all nations, should be justified by faith in that Seed; that is, by faith in Christ. For so St. Paul says expressly, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen by faith, preached before the Gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

A.—And upon this explicit declaration of the doctrine of the justification of guilty man before God by faith in Christ, Abraham himself “believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness:” Does this mean that he was justified?

B.—Certainly; and it may be well for you to remember, that the imputation of faith for righteousness; the non-impu-

tation of sin ; the covering of sin ; justification, and remission of sins, are phrases which, in Scripture, mean in substance the same thing ; that is, the pardon of sin, through faith in the atonement of Christ.

A.—Was not this doctrine known previously ?

B.—Yes, from the beginning, as I have already stated to you. It received an illustrious attestation in the case of Abel, who, after exhibiting his faith in the appointed sacrifice for sin, received the witness that he was righteous ; that is, he received a testimony to his justification before God, by the acceptance of his sacrifice. This was, no doubt, visibly vouchsafed for the instruction of the old world in this great and fundamental doctrine ; and the justification of Abraham was a republication and confirmation of it in the new. It was solemnly, so to speak, committed to Abraham, as one of those doctrines which his family was to preserve, and which he was to transmit to the future church of which he was made the spiritual father and example.

A.—Then this was not a private transaction between him and God ?

B.—Abraham stood in a public relation ; he was God's Prophet, and the "father of the faithful." The covenant of grace was made with him and his believing descendants ; and the rite of circumcision was the seal or sacrament of that covenant, and declared the doctrine, and offered the grace, of the covenant among all the tribes who proceeded from Abraham.

A.—Why did not Abraham settle in some one place in the land of Canaan ?

B.—He and Isaac and Jacob were appointed to wander about in it, "dwelling in tents," and not in cities, in order, it would seem, in the presence of all the nations around them, to bear the testimony of their faith as to a future world of blessedness ; for thus, as St. Paul argues, they declared plainly, that they sought "a better country, even an heavenly." Have you marked the circumstances which gave so eminent a character to the faith of Abraham ?

A.—Yes ; and I have often been affected by them ; his

trust in God's care when he migrated with his whole family and property to an unknown land, exposed to the violence of an age which had become restless and predatory ; his entire belief that a son should be preternaturally born to him, because God had promised it ; and, to crown the whole, his willingness to offer up this long-desired and tenderly-beloved child at the command of God, believing that God "would raise him from the dead," and that he who had been given by miracle could by miracle be restored, and would be so restored, rather than the promise of God should fail.

B.—Such is the force of that grand principle of faith in God, which is equally enjoined upon us as upon the Patriarchs. You perceive also from the case of Abraham, that a true faith necessarily produces obedience, and that it is the great instrument of our sanctification.

A.—Did not Abraham violate truth when he induced Sarah to represent herself as his sister ?

B.—He concealed truth only, in a case where he was under no obligation to declare it ; for Sarah was his half-sister, the daughter of his father, though not of his mother ; those near connexions being allowed in early time. There might, however, be a fault in his trusting the matter rather to his own management, than to the care of God.

A.—Was not Melchizedec a Canaanitish King ?

B.—He was, and Priest of the true God ; consequently, he was at the head of a people who still preserved the primitive faith, and publicly confessed God amidst the other Canaanitish nations who had become corrupt and idolatrous.

A.—Was it for this reason that Abraham so greatly honoured him ?

B.—For this ; and also that Melchizedec seems to have been specially commissioned by God to be his Priest in that region. Abraham was a Priest too ; but there was something in the case of Melchizedec, which made him "greater than Abraham," as the Apostle Paul shows.

A.—Did Abraham know that he was a type of the Christ ?

B.—It is not unlikely that he had some intimation of this.

A.—In what did his typical character consist ?

B.—First, in his titles, “ King of Righteousness,” which is the meaning of his name ; and “ King of Salem,” or Peace. Second, in the omission of all mention of his genealogy in Scripture, which shows that he was not one of a line of Priests, not an hereditary Priest, and that the order of his priesthood was therefore special and peculiar to himself, as was that of our Lord.

A.—Has there not been a striking accomplishment of the prophecy respecting Ishmael, the son of Hagar, Abraham’s secondary wife ?

B.—A very striking one, which remains exhibited to this day. His seed was to be exceedingly multiplied ; and the Arabs are still a very numerous people. He was to be “ a wild man ;” that is, to live in a rambling and unsettled state, which the Arabs do to the present hour ; for it is to be observed, that such prophecies chiefly respect the descendants of the persons who were the subjects of them. His hand was to be against every man ; and the Arabs are universal marauders : And **every** man’s hand against him ; which has been fulfilled in the numerous attempts made by the most powerful states to extirpate them, but in vain ; for he has ever dwelt, and still dwells, “ in the presence of all his brethren.” The Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman empires have passed away ; the kingdoms of Syria, and Israel, and Judah, and Egypt, are utterly extinct ; but the Arabs remain in their native seats, free and independent as ever, and preserve unimpaired an exact resemblance to the first descendants of the son of Hagar.

A.—Do any of the ancients allude to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah ?

B.—Yes ; the Jewish Prophets ; Josephus, the Jewish historian ; and several heathen writers, especially the Latin annalist Tacitus, who says, that those cities “ were burnt by the stroke of thunder-bolts from heaven.” The country itself has always borne the traces of this fearful display of the divine vengeance ; which has been remarked by all travellers, ancient and modern. A recent geographer says, “ The valley of the Jordan offers many traces of volcanoes ; the bituminous and

sulphurous water of Lake Asphaltus, the lavas and pumice thrown out on its banks, and the warm bath of Taborieh, show that this valley has been the theatre of a fire not yet extinguished."

A.—The death of Sarah, and the negotiation of Abraham with the children of Heth, or the Hittites, for a burial-place, are related in a very touching and graphic manner, and seem to place us in the midst of the scene.

B.—This is the case with all the narratives of Moses ; and there is so much truth to nature, to the age, and to the characters themselves, that they are felt at once to be genuine. Abraham refused to bring his dead into "the choice of the sepulchres" of the children of Heth, although so honourably offered to him. He sought a family burial-place, according to the interesting custom of that and subsequent ages. These were usually formed out of rocks, the excavations being supported by pillars, and the ground around planted with trees. There the family union was continued, and successive generations were "gathered to their fathers." The negotiation on this occasion was, you will perceive, carried on at the gate of the city, where, from the most ancient times, the elders met to hear complaints, administer justice, make conveyances of titles and estates, and to transact other public affairs. Thus we read of "elders in the gate;" (Deut. xxii. 15;) and of him that "reproveth and rebuketh in the gate." (Isaiah xxix. 21.) The Ottoman court is likewise in our times called The Porte, from the distribution of justice, and other public business carried on at its gates.

A.—What was the sin of Esau in selling his birthright ?

B.—It was the privilege of the first-born to be the head and Priest of the family ; and in this case it also included the promise of the Messiah to be born in that line, unless altered by a sovereign act of God. Esau despised therefore all these religious considerations, to gratify a capricious appetite ; for there was no real necessity in the case ; and he is therefore made, by St. Paul, the exemplar of all "profane persons," who for fleshly gratifications despise spiritual things.

A.—But was the conduct of Jacob justifiable ?

B.—Not at all ; for, although the birthright was intended for him in the divine counsels, he took his cause out of the hand of God, and thereby sinned, and was afterwards punished by many and great afflictions.

A.—Jacob served Laban seven years for Rachel : Was that the method of obtaining wives ?

B.—Unless the suitor had valuable presents to make. But Jacob having nothing to offer, he gave his labour to Laban. This custom still remains ; for Burckhardt, in his Travels in Syria, remarks : “ I once met with a young man who had served eight years for his food only ; at the end of that period he obtained the daughter of his master in marriage, for whom he would otherwise have had to pay seven or eight hundred piastres.”

A.—What was taught to Jacob by his dream of the ladder, and of the angels of God ascending and descending upon it ?

B.—It was an emblem of that intercourse between heaven and earth, which is established by Divine Providence, whose angelic ministers are always employed in behalf of them that fear him. It declared to Jacob, “ that the man who was under the custody and protection of God, wanted not company in a wilderness, nor security in danger.” *

A.—The wrestling of Jacob with an angel is a remarkable scene : Was it real or visionary ?

B.—That it was not a vision, is plain from the lameness to which Jacob was ever afterwards subject. The appearance was one of those temporary manifestations of the Son of God in human form, which occasionally were vouchsafed in those ages. Jacob was evidently impressed with this belief from the beginning of the transaction, as appears from his seeking a blessing of the angel so earnestly. The endeavours of this mysterious being to get loose from the grasp of the Patriarch, were designed to call forth Jacob’s earnest desire for this blessing ; and it was at last granted to his determined perseverance, in order to encourage all men in all ages to “ pray and not to faint.” As the blessing which Jacob obtained was not

* Bishop Hall.

apparently temporal, we are to conclude that it was a spiritual one, an assurance of the divine favour and reconciliation at a time when his afflictions and dangers had brought all his sins and failings painfully to his remembrance.

A.—The account of Joseph's persecutions, exaltation, and reconciliation is so plain, and delivered with such touching simplicity and pathos, that one can scarcely interrupt the narrative, by asking any questions. I wish, however, to be informed what might be the great design of Providence in bringing the Abrahamic family into Egypt?

B.—That they might multiply in numbers, and so be raised into a people powerful enough to occupy the land from which the Canaanites were to be expelled; and also, that God might, by miraculous interposition, assert his own divinity in Egypt, and humble the idols in which the besotted people of that land trusted.

A.—The blessings which Jacob pronounced upon his sons, before his death, are no doubt to be regarded as predictions.

B.—They are so in the most illustrious sense. They point out emblematically the portions of the land of Canaan which each tribe should occupy; or the characters by which it should be distinguished; or the pursuits, whether of husbandry, pasture, or commerce, which they should follow; and they at once show that he was endued with a prophetic spirit, and express, in the strongest manner, his faith in the promises made to Abraham and renewed to himself. Thus he was one of those who "died in the faith." So calmly, and with so much moral majesty, terminated the pilgrimage of this venerable Patriarch, the faults of whose youth were indeed righteously visited, but, by sanctified affliction, purged away. The mild, benevolent, and truly fatherly character of Jacob, is greatly to be admired. He was taken up to Canaan, and buried with his fathers, in the burial-place purchased by Abraham of the sons of Heth.

A.—Is not the prophecy, contained in his blessing pronounced upon Judah, considered of importance as one of the proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus?

B.—You refer to the prediction, "The sceptre shall not

depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come."

A.—The same: And may I ask, whether Shiloh is the Messiah?

B.—This is allowed by Jewish, as well as by Christian, commentators; and the prediction states, that Judah should continue a distinct tribe, with rulers and judges of its own, until Messiah should come; but that after his coming, the independent authority and tribeship of Judah should pass away. Mark, then, the force and truth of this prediction; for although the ten tribes which constituted the kingdom of Israel never returned, as a political body, after they were carried away into Assyria, Judah was restored after a captivity of seventy years in Babylon; and the political state of the Jews was revived. Our Lord was born in the days of Herod, the last Prince who had any claim to be called independent; so that the sceptre had not then departed. But the power of the Jews had begun rapidly to decline; and in a short time after his death, Judah was wholly annihilated as a political state, and continues without power and authority to this day: Nay, the tribes are so confounded as not to be distinguished. How surely is the future known to God!

CONVERSATION VIII.

Patriarchal Dispensation of Religion—The Israelites in Egypt—Moses—Egyptian Magicians—The Passover.

A.—WHAT means the word Exodus?

B.—The Exodus is the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt ; an event which terminates what may be called the patriarchal dispensation, and henceforward exhibits the visible church of God under a new aspect ; associated with a powerful nation, with a political character, and under peculiar laws ; of whom God condescended to become the head, or sovereign ; and sustaining its part in the struggles and changes of the kingdoms and empires which surrounded it. But in taking leave of the ages before Moses, it may be useful to you to remark how truly all the principles of Christianity were recognised among the pious of those early times. True religion, under all its dispensations, is thus proved to be the same ; differing in circumstances, and in degrees of light, but eminently one,—a revelation of the same truths and of the same hopes.

A.—Favour me with an illustration of this important point.

B.—Through all these the earliest times, we see the holy Patriarchs, who were inspired teachers of truth, the Prophets of God, and the Priests of their respective tribes, consenting in the belief of the doctrine of the unity of God ; a distinction of divine Persons in the one Godhead ; the creation and conservation of all things by God ; a general and a particular providence ; a divine law, fixing the distinctions of right and wrong ; the fall and the corruption, the guilt and the danger, of man ; the doctrine of atonement through the voluntary and vicarious sufferings of the Seed of the woman ; the necessity of penitence, and of faith in that atonement, in order to forgiveness ; the obligation and efficacy of prayer ; the doctrine

of direct divine influence ; practical righteousness ; the accountability of man ; the immortality of the soul ; the resurrection of the body ; and a heavenly and unfading inheritance. These were the leading principles of the true religion as received in the families of Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. They were held, no doubt, by Melchizedec, and that branch of the church of God over which he ministered ; and perhaps, also, by other families and communities in more distant places, notwithstanding the rapid progress which superstition and idolatry had made in the world. The insulated book of Job is presumptive of this ; for it manifestly belongs to the patriarchal age. In this book allusions are made to almost all these doctrines, together with that of satanic agency, and the resurrection of the body ; whilst it generally confirms the important truths, that the afflictions of good men are the instruments of moral correction ; and that neither is the prosperity of the wicked any proof of God's disregard to human conduct, nor the afflictions of the righteous any argument against the efficacy of prayer, or the interest which good men have in the divine favour.

A.—Thus, then, I see when religion is grounded upon human authority and opinion, it is ever changing, running into the prudence of superstition, or narrowing up itself within the limits of a withering scepticism ; whilst that which is from God is like himself,—“ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

B.—And therefore affords a firm foundation for trust and hope.

A.—But to proceed to that illustrious event, the deliverance of the descendants of Jacob from Egypt : What might be the motive with the Egyptian Government for the oppression of a people they had so long favoured ?

B.—Probably political jealousy and fear ; feelings that operated upon those cruel dispositions which are always found in idolatrous countries. Previously to the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt, the Egyptians had suffered a calamitous invasion from some Asiatic tribes, whom they called shepherds, that is, tribes forming some of those nomadic and

migratory communities of which we have spoken. These possessed themselves of Lower Egypt for a considerable space of time, and committed great cruelties. They had been but recently expelled when Joseph came into power ; and the land of Goshen, probably left unoccupied by their expulsion, was assigned to the sons of Jacob, as favourable to the grazing of cattle. In that most fertile district the Israelites multiplied exceedingly under the special blessing of God ; and the Pharaoh then reigning might think that a second shepherd invasion would be the result, although their peaceable demeanour gave no ground for the alarm.

A.—Jealousy and political fear are always cruel ; and I can easily conceive the sad state of oppression to which the Israelites were reduced when, taken from their rural occupations, they were obliged to undergo all kinds of servile and laborious work, under severe task-masters ; and when the great political object was to waste down their numbers by cruel and harassing treatment.

B.—Yet, by the divine blessing, they multiplied ; which was the reason for that cruel decree against the Hebrew infants, so outraging to humanity, and which, as cold-blooded murders, rendered Pharaoh and his people, who appear to have gone into his views, fit objects of the divine vengeance.

A.—Moses was born during the operation of this sanguinary decree ; and there is something very affecting in the account of his preservation.

B.—It is not merely affecting, but deeply instructive. That his parents hid him for three months, without being “afraid of the King’s commandment,” was a noble instance of the faith which relies upon God ; and defies the power of the mightiest men. It was in the same faith, no doubt, that they exposed the child upon the river Nile, in an ark of rushes ; and it was rewarded. The child was found by Pharaoh’s daughter, who, affected by the tears of the exposed infant, had compassion upon him.

A.—This was an instance of the superior sensibility of woman.

B.—True ; but her heart was doubtless touched with this

strong affection to Moses by the secret hand of God, whose special providence was here, in several respects, remarkably displayed.

A.—One instance, doubtless, was the appointment of his own mother to be the nurse of Moses.

B.—Truly so ; for by that the all-important point of his instruction in the true religion of his fathers was secured, and that, too, by the tuition of a mother of eminent piety ; as her faith, before mentioned, shows. The other was, that in addition to this, he was trained up, by a courtly education, “in the wisdom of the Egyptians,” and in the practice of governing men, to be the ruler and leader of the people he was appointed to deliver.

A.—Was his killing the Egyptian an unlawful act ?

B.—His espousing the cause of his oppressed people, “as the people of God,” was a religious act, and an instance of lofty and generous patriotism. For this he renounced his adoption by Pharaoh’s daughter, and the “pleasures” and “riches of Egypt ;” and having had some intimation, probably from heaven, of his being their destined deliverer, he was led at this time to go out “among his brethren,” secretly to prepare them to resist their oppressors. The lawfulness of the act of killing the Egyptian, who was smiting a Hebrew, and probably intended to inflict a mortal blow, depends upon circumstances which, as they are not stated, prevent us from forming an opinion for or against his conduct. It was evidently not an act of private resentment or revenge, and therefore not of malice. It was done also, as appears from the story, in the presence of other Hebrews, although no Egyptian was near ; and as one of them reproached Moses with it afterwards, he found that they were not ripe for the assertion of their own liberty ; and that he himself was not safe among a people already debased in spirit by long-continued slavery.

A.—In Midian, where he followed a shepherd’s life for many years, he appears to have given up the hope of delivering his people.

B.—At least, having attempted it once, before God’s time,

and failed, he waited for special direction. This he received, when God spake unto him out of the burning bush.

A.—The account of this solemn transaction, with the miraculous powers with which Moses was invested, appears to have convinced the elders of Israel that he was divinely commissioned to effect their deliverance from Egypt; and I suppose that it was in their name, as the natural rulers of the people, that he demanded their liberation from Pharaoh.

B.—Yes; and more than that, he made the demand in the name of the true God, whose threatenings against them as delivered by Moses made the Egyptians resort for succour to the gods and demons whom they worshipped; and thus was brought on that grand contest with the idols of Egypt and their votaries, which issued in the loftiest demonstration of the supremacy and glory of Jehovah. By the mighty plagues he inflicted, he was “exalted above all the gods of Egypt,” who had no power to deliver out of his hand those who trusted in them. “The pride of the Egyptians was humbled; their most sacred prejudices wounded; the Nile was contaminated by blood; their dwellings polluted by loathsome reptiles; their cleanly persons defiled by vermin; their pure air had swarmed with troublesome insects; their cattle had perished; their bodies broken out with a filthy disease; their early harvest had been destroyed by the hail; the latter harvest by the locusts; an awful darkness enveloped them for three days;”* and then, in one night of horror, “all the first-born in the land of Egypt were smitten,” “and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.” Finally came the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the destruction of the obdurate Pharaoh and his host. If by such a demonstration of the sole divinity of Jehovah, and so signal a punishment of an idolatrous people, the infatuated passion for the setting up of idols was not checked among the surrounding nations, these events at least left them without excuse.

A.—Was not Pharaoh’s heart hardened by God?

* Milman.

B.—Yes ; but not till he had wilfully hardened it himself, as the history will show you. And in all ages men who have wilfully and perseveringly resisted conviction, have been given up to the hardness and impenitence of their hearts ; which is what is meant by the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart.

A.—Were the imitations of the signs of Moses by the Egyptian magicians done by manual dexterity or by diabolical assistance ?

B.—Probably by both, as the case might require. Sleight-of-hand has been carried in the east to a very high degree of skill in all ages ; and was cultivated by the pagan Priests in order to impose upon the multitude by “ lying wonders ; ” mechanical arts and contrivances were also employed by them for the same purpose ; and, to a certain extent, diabolical agency was probably permitted. Idolatrous countries, you are to recollect, are places where, in an emphatic sense, “ Satan has his seat.”

A.—We may then conclude, that, in the wisdom of God, such signs were first wrought by Moses as they could best imitate ; for though the imitation was very imperfect, it was sufficient to convince a people ready to embrace any delusion in favour of religious error. But when it was manifest that they had exhausted all their magical or mechanical resources, such wonders followed as even constrained them to acknowledge “ the finger of God.”

B.—And thus the discomfiture of the Egyptian priesthood, with all the auxiliaries they could command, whether of magicians or demons, was rendered the more illustrious and indubitable, both for the instruction of the Israelites and of all mankind.

A.—Why was the Passover instituted on the eve of the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, and of the deliverance of Israel ?

B.—This was a most important institution, considered merely as a proof of the occurrence of these great events to future ages. As an annual festival, it has always been observed by the whole body of the Jews even to this day ; and its

origin can only be accounted for by allowing it to have taken place at the time, and under the circumstances, of its first alleged appointment. For if the first-born of Egypt were not destroyed, and those of the Israelites preserved, and if they did not upon this march out of Egypt, and pass dry-shod through the sea, it would not have been possible for any man to have persuaded a whole nation that this had happened to them, any more than to persuade the people of London that they had walked dry-shod over the Thames on a certain day, and to institute an annual festival in commemoration of the fact.

A.—Clearly not; and therefore the festival proves the historical fact.

B.—But it had a higher intention. It was one of the ancient types of Christ. Hence, says the Apostle Paul, “Christ our **PASSOVER** is sacrificed for us.” It was a solemn renewal of the patriarchal doctrine, that “without shedding of blood there is no remission;” since it was the interposition of the sprinkled blood upon their door-posts, which alone turned aside the stroke of the destroying angel; and the act, too, of sprinkling the blood upon the posts of their doors, was an act of faith on the part of the Israelites. Here, then, we have still the three grand doctrines,—substitution of the innocent for the guilty, the shedding of vicarious blood, and faith as the means of interesting men in it.

CONVERSATION IX.

Publication of the Law—Sacred Books—Design of the Mosaic Institute—Decalogue—Types—The ceremonial Law—Jewish political Law—Temporal Sanctions—Prophecies of Moses—Slavery—Prosperous Periods.

A.—PASSING over matters in this history, for an explanation of which I can resort to commentators, may I ask what were the chief purposes of so solemn a publication of the law of God from Mount Sinai?

B.—The reason of this did not terminate in the Jews of that generation, but respected that people in future times, and, indeed, the whole race of men.

A.—In what way?

B.—Then, for the first time, were the revelations of God's will to men given in a written form. The Ten Commandments were inscribed by the finger of God upon tables of stone; the other numerous commandments and ordinances which were also promulgated from Mount Sinai were written by Moses in a book; and, along with the historical writings of Moses, were kept with religious care, as containing at once the history, the genealogies, the religion, and the ecclesiastical and political legislation of the nation.

A.—This was the more necessary, I conceive, as the laws of God had become more numerous, the life of man shorter, and the state of society more tumultuous and variable; so that tradition, which, as having passed hitherto through so few hands, from Shem, the son of Noah, through Abraham to Moses, was a safe mode of transmitting truth, had become inadequate to its accurate preservation.

B.—An important pledge was also given for the uncorrupted preservation of these sacred records, by their not being lodged with private persons, but intimately and inseparably connected with the public institutions of a whole nation, ren-

dering constant reference to them necessary ; and thus keeping them in the sight, and within the knowledge, of the people at large, from age to age. For at stated seasons the law was publicly read before all the people of Israel ; and the originals were reserved in the ark. Every King was required to write out a copy of the law for his own constant use ; and the people, who were commanded to teach their children diligently, must also have had copies. It is likewise an important fact, in proof of the exact preservation of the sacred books, that the Samaritan Pentateuch, that is, the five Books of Moses in the Samaritan or old Hebrew or Phenician character, used for ages by the rival Samaritans, agrees, with but few variations of an unimportant kind, the effect evidently of transcription, with the Jewish copy which is written in the Chaldee character. The reverence, too, of the Jews, from the earliest times, for their sacred writings was another guarantee for their integrity ; for, according to the testimony of both Philo and Josephus, they would suffer any torments rather than change a single point or iota in them ; and, accordingly, though they are charged so severely by our Lord with making void the law by their traditions, they are never charged with corrupting or falsifying the letter of it. To the same sanctuary of the ark were consigned, as they were successively produced, all those historical and prophetical books which were written from the time of Joshua to David. Solomon lodged these along with the ark in the temple which he had built, and added the inspired productions of his own pen. To these were added the writings of the Prophets who lived before the captivity ; for that these copies were taken to Babylon, and not destroyed with the temple, is clear from Daniel, who refers to them. (Dan. ix. 11.) During the captivity, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, were added to the sacred collection ; then the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi, not by private authority, but by the Jewish church.

A.—Since all the Prophets inveigh bitterly against the sins of the Jews, is not this a strong presumption that their writings must have been received at first as divinely inspired, or other-

wise the national pride of the Jews would have buried them in oblivion ?

B.—True ; but we have more than this presumptive evidence, however strong ; for we know from the catalogue of Josephus, that the books of our Old Testament are the same as those received by the Jews before the time of Christ ; and both Christ and his Apostles speak of them by way of distinction from all other writings, as THE SCRIPTURES ; and declare that they were given “ by inspiration of God ; ” so that the same arguments which prove the Messiahship of Christ, and the inspiration of the Apostles, prove, consequentially, the truth, the uncorruptness, and the authority of all the books of the Old Testament ; which since their time could not, on account of the vigilance of Christians, be corrupted by the Jews ; who, however, to do them justice, cannot be charged with this crime.

A.—A standing written revelation, in which every one may read the will of God, and by which every doctrine may be tried, is, indeed, an unspeakable advantage. But we have digressed from the leading design of the law given from Mount Sinai.

B.—If you include both the republished moral law, and the other parts of the Mosaic Institute, the design was four-fold : To record the moral laws under which the Jews and all men are placed to the end of time ; to exhibit, in a more perfect system of types, the grace of the evangelical dispensation, which Messiah was to introduce in its perfected form ; to keep the Israelites from the idolatrous practices of other nations ; and to provide for their civil government.

A.—On each of these points I beg for information.

B.—As to the decalogue, or ten commandments, it is impossible to conceive a more perfect system of morality founded upon religion, as all true morality must be ; and, when rightly understood, it is as much a law for the principles and the heart, as for the external conduct. It requires the one only and true God to be taken as our God ; that is, not only to be acknowledged, but to be worshipped, reverenced, trusted in, and supremely loved, to the exclusion of every

other being, real or imaginary. It forbids the use of all images and likenesses of invisible things, for purposes of worship, or assistance in worship ; and thus enjoins a purely spiritual service, free from those superstitions which have been uniformly found to debase the mind, and alienate the heart from God. It forbids the impious, profane, or light use of the name of God, either by false swearing, or in common conversation ; and thus reserves that “glorious and fearful name” for those solemn and religious appeals by which judicial oaths are made binding upon the consciences of men, and influential upon the peace and good faith of society. It enjoins the observance of the Sabbath, that institution so important to religion and to benevolence. It surrounds the paternal relation with sanctity and honour ; in which may also be included the reverence and submission we owe to superiors and governors. It guards against murder and the malignant passions which lead to it ; against adultery, or all the sins of the flesh, requiring in this respect a perfect purity of thought, and inward chastity. It forbids all fraud and wrong, and therefore enjoins a perfect righteousness and justice in all our concerns with others, securing to every one his due, of what kind soever that may be. It inhibits all false accusations in private intercourse or in courts of law ; and thus regulates the tongue. And it lays its restraint upon all covetous and discontented desires. To these particular laws, which bear both a positive and a negative character, and are in themselves exceedingly comprehensive, we are to add those general principles in which this law is summed up, and thus rendered capable of application to every branch of religion, and to all parts of duty, however particular ; such as, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ; and thy neighbour as thyself :” And, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them :” So that no case is left unprovided for, and a beautiful and harmonious system of religion and morals is exhibited, such as no other nation ever could enact, or even conceive ; and the whole is enforced by the authority of God, and the sanction of death in a future state of being, as the penalty of disobedience.

A.—But if this was part of the law of the Jews as a nation, or in their civil state, was the penalty of death extended beyond the present life?

B.—The Israelites stood both in the relation of subjects and of creatures towards God; and therefore he imposed penalties which respected both this life and that which is to come. But that great and leading branch of the Mosaic law, which we call the Decalogue, was distinguished from all the other laws given to Israel by its being given first; and by its being written by the finger of God on tables of stone. The reason of this is obvious: It was a republication of God's moral law, which had all along been in force, and was designed to be in force for ever; and also to show that it was not a merely municipal or political law, but the law of the Israelites as God's creatures, and answerable to him in the court of their conscience, and at the day of judgment.

A.—This, indeed, as I might have noticed, appears from the nature of those commands which extended to the thoughts and purposes of the heart; as that which forbids covetousness; of which no cognisance, therefore, could be taken by the human tribunals which God established among the Jews.

B.—And this is made still more certain by the consideration that our Lord and his Apostles uniformly declare sin to be the transgression of this law, among all people; so that every transgressor, whether Jew or Gentile, is brought thereby under the penalty of everlasting death.

A.—Does the curse, which was afterwards pronounced upon all who "continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," lie upon all transgressors of the moral law, as well as of other parts of the Mosaic institutions?

B.—Yes; and in its highest sense.

A.—Then, as we have all sinned against this holy law in innumerable instances, it appears to me to be a most fearful revelation.

B.—And it was accordingly delivered amidst the darkness, thunderings, fearful voices, and fires which enveloped, and issued from, the summit of Sinai. To an innocent being the law of God can only appear arrayed in an attractive "beauty

of holiness ; " but to a man conscious of guilt, and who sees its tremendous maledictions hanging over his head, its revelations of holiness and justice must be terrible. They were so represented from Sinai, because they are so in truth ; for God " hateth iniquity," and is " a consuming fire " to sinners ; and because they were intended to awaken us to a due sense of the evil of our sins, and to convince us that our case, if left to ourselves, is desperate and hopeless ; and to lead us to " smite upon our breasts " with the publican, and to cry, " God be merciful to us sinners ! "

A.—But you have said that the law knows no mercy, and that all " right to the tree of life " is cut off by transgression.

B.—And therefore you may recollect that St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, when speaking of those who rejected the Gospel, and who sought justification by the works of the law, represents them as coming to " the mount which might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest ; " whilst Christians come to " Mount Sion," the calm and peaceful residence of God in his character of " Jehovah, merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin."

A.—Then I am to understand that, as in the antediluvian world there was a fearful display of the terrible and offended majesty of God in the cherubim and the flame of fire placed at the east gate of the garden of Eden ; and a mild and merciful manifestation of God, in that " presence " before which the Patriarchs brought their sacrifices, or at least which was often sensibly and graciously manifested on such occasions ; so under the law there was, in contrast with the terrors of the Mount Sinai, a gracious presence of God before which the penitent brought their sacrifices, and offered up their prayers.

B.—Yes ; the cloud of the divine presence was upon the tabernacle, or rested within the holy of holies ; and wherever that was, it was a pledge of mercy, and consecrated the place of sacrifice and prayer. But this leads me to the second great design of the Mosaic institute,—to exhibit, in a more perfect system of types, the grace of that evangelical dispensation

which Messiah was to introduce in its perfect form, and to seal with his own blood.

A.—This appears a large and deeply interesting subject.

B.—It is ; and, for that reason, deserves your most serious attention ; although I shall be only able to suggest topics for your future consideration.

A.—Will it not be necessary that I should previously know what is meant by a type ?

B.—A type, in the theological sense, is a sign or example, prepared and designed by God, to prefigure some future thing. Of what was thus designedly typical in the Old Testament, the key is furnished by the New ; and by attending to its references and suggestions on this subject, we shall enter into the depths of the meaning of many parts of the Jewish Scriptures, which would otherwise be comparatively uninstructive ; whilst by confining ourselves to our infallible guides, our Lord and his Apostles, we shall avoid those fanciful interpretations which are founded upon some resemblances, more or less distant, which may exist between things which have no natural or appointed relation to each other, and which have rendered the writings of some good men so objectionable to every sober critic.

A.—Then you seem to hint that there have been errors in the interpretation of types, both on the side of excess and defect.

B.—And therefore the only sure guide is that which can never deceive ; that is, the New Testament, which in so many of its parts is a commentary upon the Old. Guided by that, a large and interesting scene of divinely appointed types and symbols, set up in different ages for the edification of the ancient church, and for the confirmation of our faith who see them so exactly realized, will be presented to us. We shall see that the first Adam was a type of the second in the way of contrast ; one, by disobedience, bringing in death, the other by obedience, bringing in life ; the human race falling in one, and rising again in the other ; that the salvation of Noah in the ark by faith was the figure of our salvation, through baptism, the expression of our faith ; that Melchizedec's

priesthood was the designed type of that of our Lord ; that the justification of Abraham was the pattern of man's justification through faith, in all ages ; that the offering and receiving back of Isaac was a figure of the death and resurrection of the beloved and only Son of God ; that as the passover was connected by divine appointment with the salvation and rescue of Israel, so is the death of the Lamb of God our Passover, in like manner, by divine appointment necessarily connected with our redemption from spiritual bondage ; that the Jews in the wilderness presented the instructive type of " the church in the wilderness " of this world, on its journey to the heavenly inheritance ; that the land of Canaan was the instituted symbol of heaven to Abraham, and to all his believing descendants ; that David was the emblem of the conquering Messiah ; and that Solomon became his type, as ruling a kingdom, extending " from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," and which he governed in peace.

A.—Since all these instances are supported by the authority of the New Testament, they cannot be doubted ; and they seem to suggest to me the great and impressive thought, that the redemption of man by Christ was that to which the events of all ages, and the dispensations of God to mankind, in succession, had respect ; and that they form but one grand preparation for the manifestation of Christ as the Saviour of the world.

B.—You are right ; and therefore you will be prepared to consider the Mosaic ceremonial law as a typical institution. All previous sacrifices had borne this character ; but now these evangelical adumbrations or symbols were presented to the eye of the pious and inquiring Jew and proselyte under a systematic and impressive arrangement.

A.—Be pleased to be a little more particular.

B.—The tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness for the most solemn acts of worship, you will recollect, was divided into two parts,—the holy place, and the Holy of holies. In the latter was placed the ark covered with the mercy-seat, or, in New Testament language, God's "throne of grace," overshadowed by the cherubim ; into which none but the High

Priest, in his “ holy garments of glory and beauty,” entered, and that but once every year, with the blood of atonement. Sacrifices were offered every morning and evening, besides the various sacrifices brought by individuals. Every sin, whether national or individual, was expiated by sacrifices ; and once in the year there was a solemn day of national expiation. First, a bullock was slain, and the blood sprinkled by the High Priest within the Holy of holies itself ; afterwards a goat, whose blood was sprinkled, in like manner, before the mercy-seat ; then the High Priest was to lead forth a second goat, and, confessing over him all the iniquities of the people, to put them upon the head of the goat, and to send the animal, thus bearing the sins of the people, into the wilderness ; so that in this great and annual expiation, the only day on which the High Priest entered into the Holy of holies, into the immediate presence of God, we see confession of sin, the substitution of a victim in place of the guilty ; a figurative transfer of sins, the sprinkling of blood before the mercy-seat, the bearing away of iniquity, and the actual reconciliation of man to God.

A.—Have we, then, any authority from the New Testament to consider all these singular ceremonies typical ? for to this authority you have referred me as both the guide to, and the guard of, typical interpretations.

B.—You shall yourself be the judge. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking generally, calls the meats and drinks, the holy days, new moons and Sabbaths of the Jews, including in the latter the services performed on those festivals, “a shadow of things to come ;” “the body” of which shadow, that which the shadow faintly exhibited, “is Christ.” Again : He calls the sacrifices of the tabernacle “the shadow of good things to come,” and places them in contrast with “the very image of things ;” that is, of the good things, just before mentioned. Of the typical appointment and designation of the tabernacle service, he discourses at large in Hebrews ix. : “But into the second went the High Priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people ; the

Holy Ghost thus signifying," showing by this type, " that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." Again : He calls the tabernacle itself "a figure," or parable, " for the time then present ;" and "the things under the law, patterns of things in the heavens." He designates the holy places made with hands, "antitypes of the true ;" and adds, "It was necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these" inferior sacrifices ; " but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices."

A.—This sufficiently proves the typical character of the Levitical ceremonial ; but what in particular was taught ?

B.—Still the ancient patriarchal doctrines, that man, the sinner, could only be reconciled to God by the shedding of blood ; and that all human hope rested upon "the Lamb," which God should appoint "for a burnt-offering," and that he only could "bear away" the sin of the world. But although the doctrine was the same, the circumstances now added to the ancient patriarchal ritual were highly illustrative. The holiest place of the tabernacle was a type of heaven ; Aaron, a type of "the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus ;" the mercy-seat, of "the throne of grace ;" and the entrance of the High Priest with blood, of the ascension of our Lord into heaven after his passion, to make intercession for us, and to open the way to the holiest, first to our prayers, in which we draw near to God, and then to our persons, that we may dwell in his presence for ever. Now, therefore, we are exhorted to draw near "with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

A.—All these glorious truths being revealed to us, we can accurately interpret these types ; but how far may we conclude that they were known, as to their import, to the Jews themselves ?

B.—Certainly their information on these subjects was not equal to ours ; but their knowledge depended upon their spirituality. "The eyes" of the pious and prayerful were "opened to see wondrous things out of the law" of God, just as the spiritual meaning of the New Testament is now

unfolded to the devout and pious. A veiled truth is not wholly hidden ; a shadow indicates the outline of the substance ; and, as all these sacrifices were prescribed from the earliest ages as acts of faith,—a faith, the object of which was Messiah,—the truly pious were always looking forward to a suffering and atoning, as well as to a ruling and victorious, Christ, and to the redemption to be effected by him. David could introduce him saying, “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not ; a body hast thou prepared for me ;” a nature in which alone he could suffer, and become a sacrifice. And Isaiah speaks of him as “wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” “They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.”

A.—I now see the admirable wisdom and fitness of the ceremonial law, which I may perhaps call the **Gospel** of that dispensation.

B.—For this you have the authority of St. Paul, who says, “For unto us was the **Gospel** preached, as well as unto them.”

A.—Have we any instance of uninspired Jewish writers who regarded their ceremonial law as mystical and typical ?

B.—None of these writers are very ancient ; and subsequently to Christianity, their prejudices lay against all such interpretations as would favour Christian doctrine ; yet Philo, who lived about the time of Christ, regards the tabernacle as typical of heaven, and the priestly administration of Messiah there. A gloss upon the Babylonian Talmud says expressly, “The figures of the tabernacle relate to spiritual figures, that we may learn from thence more sublime truths.” And Rabbi Bechai observes, “The statutes of Moses are a figure of spiritual things, and those spiritual things are above.” Many other observations of a similar kind might be produced ; but these will show you, that, among the Jewish writers, and according to their traditions, the law had a mystical significance, and, this being admitted, the faithful in the earlier times would study it with a reference to a further design, and by the teaching Spirit of God would be led into all the truth which was essential to their faith and piety. David, for instance,

knew that Melchisedec was a type of Messiah; for he prophesies of Messiah's priesthood, as "of the order" of that mystic personage.

A.—But you mentioned a third design of the Mosaic institute.

B.—This was to provide laws for them as a nation, or in their political capacity. These statutes you will find in the writings of Moses. I need only point out to you some particulars in which the laws of Moses exhibit a great superiority to the enactments of other legislators of antiquity. I must, however, suggest, that there is one grand peculiarity in the Israelitish constitution to be found in no other: It was a solemn compact or covenant between God as their political Head, and them as his people or subjects. They had no need of any legislative assemblies, for their laws were all fixed, and could not be added to or repealed; their Magistrates had the sole office of executing these written statutes; and the duty of the people was to submit to them. So entirely was Jehovah himself a party in this civil contract, that his immediate interposition, to bless or to punish them, as a nation, by miraculous interposition, through all the ages of their polity, was solemnly engaged. To obedience were attached victory, fruitful seasons, and every kind of prosperity: "The Lord shall command a blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all thou settest thine hand unto." On the other hand, defeat, captivity, blasting, mildew, pestilence, with every other conceivable national calamity, were made the penalties of disobedience: "The Lord shall make your plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed; moreover, he will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt." (Deut. xxviii.)

A.—For this, then, as well as for other reasons, the Jews might be called indeed a "peculiar people," as standing in so immediate a relation to God, and being governed by constant miracle.

B.—And you perceive how forcibly this circumstance proves the divine authority under which Moses acted; for would any man of common prudence, unless conscious of his speaking all these things under the inspiration and by the

command of God, have ventured to tell the Israelites that the most terrible calamities, bearing the unequivocal stamp of a supernatural visitation, should follow the violation of his institutions ; and that unfailing victories, and abundant harvests, and exemption from all the calamities which might afflict other nations, should uniformly, and in all cases, attend their observance ; when the absence of such miraculous interpositions, in any one instance, (and certainly no mortal could command them,) must have destroyed his credit, and the influence of his laws for ever ?

A.—Certainly not ; and has not the history of the Jews confirmed the fact of the divine authority with which Moses was invested when uttering these promises and threatenings ?

B.—In the most striking manner. That part of their history which is contained in the Old Testament, and which extends through many ages, most strikingly shows that a connexion, as by an unseen but almighty hand, was constantly maintained between their national obedience and their prosperity ; and between their idolatries and other transgressions of their law, and their defeats, famines, captivities, degradations, and miseries, of every kind. As often as they repented and turned again to the Lord, they obtained mercy ; but their departures from him, and their apostasies from the faith of their fathers, were as uniformly followed by acts of vengeance on the part of their offended God, so eminent as to hold them up as an admonitory example to all the nations of the earth. Their history since their last dispersion and the utter destruction of the kingdom of Judah presents, to this day, a remarkable and most exact fulfilment of the denunciations of their great lawgiver, and affords standing evidence to the present moment of his authority and plenary inspiration.

A.—To which of his denunciations do you refer ?

B.—Turn to Deuteronomy xxviii. 25, and read.

A.—“ The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies ; and thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.”

B.—Now, remember that this prophecy was uttered more than three thousand years ago, and yet to this day the Jews

are found in the four quarters of the earth, and scarcely any considerable town in the whole civilized world is without them ; so that the two facts are before us, that they are “removed” out of their own land, and are scattered “into all the kingdoms of the earth.” In vain would you look for the contemporary nations of former times. They also were at different times largely scattered into different countries by wars, captivities, and deportations, but they have been long lost in the mass ; the Jews alone remain, distinct and visible as ever, the monuments of the truth of the prophetic spirit, and of the divine commission of their great lawgiver. But read also the forty-ninth and fiftieth verses.

A.—“ The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, so swift as the eagle flieth ; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand ; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young.”

B.—You have here a manifest prediction of the invasion and conquest of the Romans. They were the most distant of any people that ever invaded Palestine ; and they are therefore said in the prophecy to “ come from far.” Their language was more unknown and foreign to the Jews than that of their Assyrian, Chaldean, or Egyptian invaders ; and when they are compared to the swiftness of an eagle, not only might the rapidity of their conquests, and the rapacity which distinguished them be meant, but an allusion be also made to the eagle standards of the Roman armies. “ The nation of fierce countenance” is a graphic description of those frowning and stern legions which carried unrelenting desolation into so many parts of the world ; and the cruelty which usually marked their conquests nowhere fell so heavy, or was directed by so much malignity of feeling, as in their invasions of Judea. Josephus, the Jewish historian, speaking of the capture of Gadara by Vespasian, says, “ The Romans showed mercy to no age, out of hatred to the nation.”

A.—In the verses which follow, I see that the most horrible calamities were to happen during the sieges which the Jews should undergo in their fortified cities ; such as famines so

severe, that wives and husbands, parents and children, should envy each other a morsel of food, and contend fiercely with each other for it ; and that fathers, yea, and mothers too, should eat their own children !

B.—Will you then turn at your leisure to the account given by Josephus of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, and you will find the following passages :—“ Wives forced the food out of the mouths of their husbands, and children out of the mouths of their parents ; and, what was the most miserable of all, mothers out of the mouths of their own infants.” Again : “ Wherever in any house but the shadow of bread appeared, instantly a battle ensued, and they who before had been on the most friendly footing, fought against each other with the greatest fury, that they might carry off some miserable scraps for their sustenance.” As for that still more affecting part of the prediction, that mothers should be impelled by the famine to kill and eat their own infants ; this happened at the siege of Samaria, mentioned 2 Kings vi. 28, 29, and at the siege of Jerusalem by the King of Babylon ; for thus mournfully does Jeremiah record the shuddering fact in Lamentations iv. 10 : “ The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children : They were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.” And when Josephus records the particulars of a Jewish mother in the siege by the Romans,—“ a woman distinguished by wealth and birth dressing her infant son, and eating him secretly,” we see the prophecy in the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh verses so circumstantially fulfilled, that it might pass for the history itself : “ The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward her children which she shall bear ; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.”

A.—Truly, all these instances of the exact fulfilment of the words of Moses prove, that he was but the medium of communicating the words of Him who seeth “ the end from the beginning.” But you were speaking of the political institu-

tions of Moses, and proposed to point out some of their peculiarities.

B.—Tenderness of human life was one of their characteristics. Not only was the crime of murder made punishable by death as in many other states ; but he who had killed a man accidentally was obliged to fly to a city of refuge, or was left exposed to the old custom, which required the next of kin to avenge the blood of his relative by slaying the killer. Thus was this ancient practice restrained from barbarity by the provision of an asylum until the case could be inquired into by the Judges ; and caution was enforced upon all, lest, by carelessly killing a fellow-creature, they should be subject to the inconvenience of flying to one of the cities of refuge, and remaining there often for a considerable time. Even an ox which gored a man to death was destroyed, to render the owners of cattle careful ; and if the owner had been told of the dangerous propensities of his beast, and neglected to restrain it, he was subject to the same penalty.

A.—Was not slavery permitted by Moses to the Jews, as in most other ancient nations ?

B.—The Hebrews themselves were all free ; only a debtor might be made a bondman for a period not exceeding seven years, in payment of his debt ; or this punishment might be inflicted upon a thief, unless he made restitution. The bondage might, indeed, be continued longer, but only by consent of the bondman himself ; and then he was obliged to be made free at the jubilee. Perpetual involuntary servitude was unknown amongst the Jews as to their brethren. Foreigners taken in war, purchased or born in the family, might be held in perpetual servitude ; but provision was made for their humane treatment ; they had the full enjoyment of the Sabbath ; they partook of the enjoyments of the three great annual festivals ; and had a right to gather what grew spontaneously on the seventh or sabbatical year, when the ground was left untilled. Their state formed an entire contrast to the condition of slaves in all other countries, and to those of the West Indies in our day ; to which is to be added, that they were chiefly of those nations of Canaan or its neighbourhood

whom God had placed under judicial malediction, and so established no example to us. The oppression of this class of men was forbidden under a sanction which no other nation ever thought of or could enact: “Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant, whether he be of thy brethren or of the strangers that are within thy gates, lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it would be sin unto thee;” which implies, that God would punish it by immediate visitation of his displeasure, according to the standing mode in which the Jews were governed by God, and his laws enforced. The killing of a slave was also murder by the Mosaic law, but in no ancient law beside; nor, to our shame be it spoken, for a long time in our own slave colonies.

A.—I think I have read, in some ancient authors, that the Jews were inhospitable to strangers.

B.—So they were represented by some, because they were enjoined to avoid that intercourse which would lead to a participation in their idolatrous customs. But strangers were at all times naturalized among the Jews, and shared equally the protection of the law: “Thou shalt neither vex nor oppress a stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” But there were other provisions which mark the merciful and benevolent character of the Jewish law. To maintain a brotherly feeling among them, they were forbidden to take usury of one another; and were commanded to relieve their neighbour “when fallen into decay, and waxed poor;” which among no other people was ever made a point of legal injunction. The gleanings of the field were by law reserved to the poor; and if a poor man pledged his garment, it was to be restored to him before night-fall, that he might not be exposed to the cold, destitute of covering. Even beasts of unequal strength, as the ox and the ass, were not to be yoked together; a kid was not to be seethed in its mother’s milk; and it was forbidden to take the young of birds and the dam together.

A.—May not the Jews be considered as having a perfect political freedom?

B.—Certainly, their constitution was in the best sense a free one. How could it be otherwise, when they had God for

their Sovereign, “whose service is perfect freedom?” They were twelve independent tribes, each family being under its natural head, and each tribe under its political head, or judge, who was bound by the laws delivered by God, and which regulated all things on principles of justice and mercy. When they forsook God, they lost their civil freedom, with all the other blessings which they enjoyed.

A.—Was education general among them?

B.—That all could read, is clear from its being made the duty of all parents to teach their children the law, which supposes that copies of it were in their hands, and that they could use them for this purpose. National education was therefore enjoined as one of the institutions of Moses.

A.—Was encouragement given to literary pursuits?

B.—The Levites had no portion of the land assigned to the tribes when they took possession of Canaan, but in lieu of this they had a tenth of the whole produce, and were diffused among the people; so that they had leisure to apply themselves to the literature of the day: From them the priesthood was furnished, and they were scribes, registrars, superintendents of weights and measures, geometricians, and physicians.

A.—I suppose, then, we must conclude that, had the Jews been faithful to their God, they would have exhibited a picture of national prosperity and happiness beyond all comparison with the nations of antiquity.

B.—Yes; and at many periods of their history they were truly prosperous and happy. Even in the times of the Judges, (four hundred and sixty years,) “not one-fourth was passed under foreign oppression; and many of the servitudes seem to have been local, extending over certain tribes, not over the whole nation. Above three hundred years of peaceful and uneventful happiness remain, to which history, only faithful in recording the crimes and sufferings of man, bears the favourable testimony of her silence.”* To these we must add a great part of the reign of David, and of Solomon,

* Milman.

with a few other favourable periods produced by the influence and example of good Kings, and which arrested for a time the downward course of “a stiff-necked and disobedient people.” Had they been obedient, the benignant and interposing providence of God, a fruitful land, regular harvests, equal laws, and a pure and beneficent religion, would have made the exulting words of Moses always applicable to them: “Happy art thou, O Israel! What people is like unto thee, a people saved of the Lord!”

CONVERSATION X.

Preservatives against Idolatry—Evils of Idolatry—Extermination of the Canaanites—Wanderings in the Wilderness—Entrance into Canaan—Miracles—Kingly Government—Schools of the Prophets—The Prophets.

A.—You mentioned a fourth leading purpose of the law,—to preserve the people from idolatry.

B.—This, also, is an important view. Idolatry is of two kinds,—the association of other deities, the fictions of our imagination, with the true God, as objects of fear or trust; and the making of images or representations of him or of his attributes, which, also, has uniformly led to the basest superstition. Both are forbidden in the first and second commandments; and in every case idolatry was punished with death. If any city fell into this crime, it was to be wholly destroyed, with its inhabitants and their property. So fearfully punished was this crime against the Majesty of Heaven, and against the purity of society!

A.—But may not idolaters be considered rather as objects of pity, because of their ignorance and absurdities, than as so deeply criminal?

B.—Idolatry is always in Scripture treated as a voluntary offence; and in all the ancient nations connected with the Jews, and in those ancient times, it was manifestly so. Their traditions spoke of God; the great interventions of the true Jehovah during the early Jewish history, were manifestations of his supreme glory before the surrounding nations; and all nature stood before them in demonstration of his “eternal power and Godhead.” St. Paul directly charges them with refusing to glorify Jehovah as God, even when they knew him; and therefore declares that they were without excuse.

A.—This I did not advert to.

B.—Nor, perhaps, have you fully considered how many

evils, both as they affect an individual in relation to God, and the civil society of which he is a member, are involved in idolatry. It destroys all trust in God; it prevents his being worshipped as supreme; it gives the reins to the imagination, and fills it with monstrous and polluted conceptions; it debases the intellect, and makes men the slaves of superstitious terror: In a word, it destroys all true religion, which essentially rests upon the unity and supremacy of God. Where these are not the objects of a steady faith, there can be no moral law, for the will of different deities may be different; no providence, for one deity may be angry with us, though another may be supposed propitious; there can be no holiness, for the idols of Paganism have ever been invested with an immoral character; and there can be no hope of forgiveness, since the only method of human salvation established by God from the beginning, rested upon the doctrine, that there is “one God, and one Mediator.” An idol, you know, is nothing, a mere figment of the fancy; and therefore to trust in that is to trust in nothing. Thus idolatry destroys all religion.

A.—For that reason, I perceive, it was an act of mercy to man to restrain it by severe penalties.

B.—Yes; and because it destroys all morality as well as religion, the Mosaic legislation would have been highly deficient, had it not restrained it by civil penalties. The Canaanites and other idolatrous nations sacrificed their children, by burning them alive to Moloch. The worship of Baal was grossly impure; and, indeed, cruelty and impurity have ever been the leading characters of idolatry to the present day. It was therefore a crime against society as well as against God; and the severity of his law spread a shield of protection over the helpless infant, prevented a savage and cruel disposition from being inculcated by the influence of superstition, and preserved the purity of the public morals.

A.—I acknowledge my folly in considering idolatry rather as an object of pity than of disgust and horror. But why were the Jews prohibited from worshipping even the true God in groves, and on the tops of hills?

B.—Because these were the places in which the Canaanites performed their idol-worship, and because the practice favoured the notion of local deities. Great care also was taken to forbid every idolatrous and superstitious practice; hence, witchcraft and necromancy were made capital crimes; and, among lesser things, the shaving of the head in a particular manner, the wearing of garments in which linen and woollen were interwoven, the sowing of a field with different kinds of grain, and other practices to which superstition had attached a magical charm and virtue. The great object of the whole was, to turn the Jews from all creatures, and from all dependence on chance, or the operation of occult powers of nature, as well as from idols, to the ennobling habit of trusting only in the living God.

A.—May the impious and abominable rites introduced by idolatry so universally among the inhabitants of Canaan, account for the command given to the Israelites, to exterminate them entirely?

B.—Even so. They had been borne with much long-suffering; they had been warned; and, since they had forfeited their lives to their offended God, he was “just in the judgments” which he inflicted upon them.

A.—Have not some infidel writers objected to this proceeding, as involving their children?

B.—Yes; but they forget that in the course of Providence, when famines, plagues, and earthquakes visit a nation for sin, children are sufferers in the common calamity. In this case the parents are punished in their children; and for children dying before actual sin, a full provision is made, as to their eternal happiness, by the mercy of God in Christ.

A.—Do they not also object to the Jews being made the instruments of this vengeance, as tending to produce in them a cruel disposition?

B.—It becomes not men to sit in judgment upon the ways of God; but these objectors do not see that the great reason of this was, that the Jews themselves, wielding the sword of divine justice against a guilty race, might receive a more awful conviction of “the severity with which the moral

Governor of the world treats wickedness, and punishes idolatry." As for the tendency to produce a cruel disposition, this is refuted by the fact, that the ancient Jews were of a much milder character than any of the nations of antiquity; and as they must have regarded themselves in this case as the instruments of the divine justice, a sufficient check was by this solemn consideration put upon all malignant passions.

A.—You will now permit me to ask a few miscellaneous questions which have occurred to me whilst reading the earlier historical books of the Old Testament. Is it lawful to inquire what might be the reasons for keeping the Israelites for forty years in the wilderness?

B.—The principal reason is revealed. It was to punish "a disobedient and gainsaying people," and to make them "ensamples to us;" lest we should, by murmuring, unbelief, and love of the world, lose that heavenly rest, of which Canaan was the type. St. Paul, therefore, admonishes us in these words: "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." But as the designs of God are often wondrously involved in each other, and a leading purpose is connected with many secondary and yet important ones, we may suppose that time was thus given for the religious training up of a new generation, who had not been debased in spirit by the long slavery of Egypt, or infected with its idolatries. An opportunity was also afforded for the continuance of that miraculous guidance of the host of Israel by the visible Deity, which rendered the type of "the church in the wilderness" more perfect and instructive; and by which a testimony was borne against idolatry on the borders of those countries along which the Israelites pursued their marches. There was also a greater display of "the riches of the longsuffering of God" towards the Canaanites, in this delay of their punishment.

A.—Was the Jordan, which was so miraculously divided, a large river?

B.—Travellers describe it, in its ordinary channel to be deep and rapid, about as broad as the Thames at Windsor. At one period of the year, however, from the melting of the

mountain snows, it overflows its banks, and more than doubles its breadth ; and it was at this period that the passage took place, so that the miracle was rendered the more illustrious. An assurance was thus given, that God would go before his people into Canaan, and that no obstacle should be able to impede their progress ; for as soon as the feet of the Priests bearing the ark touched the stream, the flow of the river was arrested, and the channel became dry ; or, as it is graphically described by the sacred historian, “ Then the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap, very far from the city Adam ; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain failed, and were cut off.” The place where the Israelites crossed the river was called in our Saviour’s time Bethabara, or, “ the place of passage.”

A.—In what did the sin of Achan consist ?

B.—In taking of the spoil which was either appointed to be destroyed, or appropriated to God’s treasury, and therefore was called “ an accursed ” or devoted “ thing.” His detection also showed, that no secret crime could be hidden from the Lord.

A.—As this detection of Achan by the lot showed the omniscience of Jehovah, so the miracle of the sun and moon standing still manifested his power over universal nature.

B.—True ; and there might be a further reason for this signal event. To the Israelites it was a striking illustration of the power of God over the most distant objects in nature, as well as those nearest to them. As Joshua is said to have “ gone up from Gilgal all night,” it is probable that the miracle took place early in the morning. The sun had risen above Gibeon which was to the east, and the moon was setting over Ajalon to the west, so that each luminary was in sight, when the whole celestial machinery was stopped by the hand of its great Artificer, with less trouble, and less danger of injury, than any one of us can stop a watch. But to the Canaanites, who worshipped the “ host of heaven,” and to whom the sun and moon were the greatest of their deities, the miracle would be peculiarly appalling. They beheld these great visible celestial gods, in whom they trusted, arrested in

their course, at the command of the General of the God of Israel, and prolonging their light only to favour their enemies in the pursuit of their own routed forces. Well might it be said, “There was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man,” so as to arrest the whole course of nature ; “for the Lord fought for Israel.”

A.—Where was the ark of the Lord, with its tabernacle, stationed after the Israelites took possession of the land of Canaan ?

B.—In Shiloh, as recorded Joshua xviii. 1, where it appears to have been placed with great solemnity ; for “the whole congregation of Israel” were assembled on the occasion. Shiloh was situated in the south part of the tribe of Ephraim, and lay about two hours’ journey from Jerusalem. To this place, therefore, the people went up, and there the great national acts of worship were performed. The ark continued at Shiloh all the days of Joshua, and through the whole period of the Judges of Israel to the time of Samuel the Prophet, and till just before the death of Eli, a period of about three hundred and fifty years. In the days of Eli it was taken by the Philistines, after a great defeat of the Israelites, and by them was sent back on account of the plagues inflicted upon them by God : It then remained in the city of Kirjath-Jearim forty-six years. From this place, which is the same as the Baale of Judah, mentioned 2 Sam. vi. 2, David brought it with great pomp to Jerusalem ; a city which he had adorned with public buildings, and made very magnificent, and where he had prepared a tabernacle for its reception on Mount Zion. It was afterwards deposited in the temple of Solomon, where it remained to the Babylonian captivity, and was lost with other sacred vessels with which that edifice was enriched.

A.—Why was the request of the Israelites to have a King reckoned to them as an offence ?

B.—Not that monarchy is an objectionable form of government in itself ; for, indeed, the Lord was their King : But, first, because it implied ingratitude to Samuel, who had governed them with singular uprightness and ability ; and,

secondly and chiefly, because it implied a distrust in the special intervention of God in raising up Judges for them, and defending them whilst the tribes existed as distinct and small republics, with no bond of connexion but their religion, their national festivals, and their covenant with God. They wished to be organized into one political body, with a King “to go out before them” in their wars, like other nations. They were faithfully warned by Samuel against the consequences which would ensue from this imitation of the oriental despots; but, as they persisted, Samuel was commissioned to anoint Saul as their Sovereign: And it is remarkable that after two illustrious and successful reigns, those of David and Solomon, that very evil which they hoped to remedy by altering the government first established by Almighty God, namely, the divided state of a community separated into tribes, was brought upon them, by the rending of the confederacy, and the establishment of two rival kingdoms, Israel and Judah. So sin meets its punishment often in its own way. Yet, notwithstanding that partial rejection of God, which was implied in setting up a kingly government without his authority, God did not forsake them, but renewed his promises of favour both to their King and them, upon condition of their obedience. This also is to be said for the Israelites in the affair,—that they considered their King as the deputy or viceroy of God himself; and therefore, they did not elect him themselves, but asked of God to appoint a King to be over them.

A.—Who were “the Prophets,” and the “sons of the Prophets,” mentioned in Samuel, and the other subsequent historical books?

B.—The “sons of the Prophets” are generally understood to be young men who were educated in the schools of the Prophets, under an inspired Prophet, in the knowledge of religion and sacred music; and who were thus qualified to teach religion and morality, and to celebrate the praises of God in sacred verse and chants, accompanied by instrumental music. They were not confined to any particular tribe, but seem to have been persons who voluntarily devoted

themselves wholly to the study and exercises of religion. It is probable that God often chose the Prophets, whom he specially inspired, out of these schools, though certainly not exclusively. The “sons of the Prophets” also appear to have been occasionally visited with a temporary inspiration; an instance of which you have in the history of Saul: “A company of” these “Prophets met him; and the Spirit of God,” the same Spirit by which they were influenced, “came upon him, and he prophesied among them.” This kind of prophesying was probably the celebration of the praises of God, under inspired impulse, in sacred songs, accompanied with musical instruments.

A.—But “the Prophets,” so called by way of eminence, were, I presume, of a higher order than these; although it appears to me a very interesting circumstance, that a regular body of men should have existed in the Jewish church as a kind of religious teachers, and employed in the work of offering up public praises to God.

B.—No doubt, in the best ages of the Jewish commonwealth, these schools of the Prophets, existing in various parts of the country, would exercise a very beneficial influence upon the people; and many a sweet sequestered spot, as well as the crowded town, was made to resound with the high praises of the God of Israel, whilst their occasional inspirations would give them great authority among the people. But in the national defections from truth and piety which followed, these schools were corrupted; and the “false Prophets,” who so often deceived the people, and pretended a divine commission, and against whom so many judgments you find frequently threatened, proceeded from them. “The Prophets,” properly so called, fell not into these corruptions; but stand before us in all the inflexibility of fidelity to their God, and in the high and fearless attitude of public reformers; awed neither by the threats of Princes nor by popular clamour; shunning no reproach, and fearing no form of martyrdom; but intent only upon delivering their message from God to an apostatizing people, in order to arrest the progress of national vice and error, to restore the pure worship of God, and the

authority of his laws, and to rescue their country from those evils which, in their sublime and terrific visions, they saw hanging over it in every form of calamity. Raised up in succession by the call and inspiration of God, they were the heroic champions of piety towards God, and justice towards men. Hence their severe rebukes of every species of oppression ; their espousal of the cause of the poor, the fatherless, and the widow ; and their remonstrances with the nobles of the land, and even with Kings, on every violation of duty. With all this we see in them an entire freedom from the spirit of faction. Kings and Princes are treated with boldness and fidelity, but always with the respect due to their station ; and when the wrongs of the people are espoused by them, they practise none of the arts of the demagogues of other nations by which they flattered popular passions, in order to obtain celebrity. They were kept from all these failings by the impressive solemnity of their commission, and the power of their inspiration ; and, fixing their regards only upon their high duties, they despised all inferior considerations. They usually resided in retired places, often in obscurity, and generally in comparative poverty ; and though by good Kings they were honoured, and their counsels were sought, they were but occasional residents at their courts. Their apparel was mean, and often symbolical of the mournful moral state of the people among whom they prophesied. Elijah was clothed with skins ; Isaiah wore sackcloth, which seems to have been the ordinary dress of the Prophets. From the piety of individuals, they sometimes received presents of bread, fruits, and honey ; but Elisha refused the costly presents of Naaman the Syrian, and inflicted the punishment of leprosy upon his covetous servant Gehazi, who clandestinely obtained part of them. You will observe several incidental circumstances, as you read the historical books of Kings and Chronicles, which indicate their general habits, frugality, and their contempt of luxury. The woman of Shunam, who appears to have been in good circumstances, put only a few plain and common utensils into the chamber which she prepared for the Prophet on his visits. The angel gave to Elijah only bread and water for a long

journey. The same sustenance was administered by Obadiah, the Governor of the King's household, to the Prophets whose lives he saved from a cruel persecution and massacre. Elisha was called from the plough, and lived in poverty ; Amos was a herdsman, and, externally, did not improve his condition ; and the sons of the Prophets who lived under the direction of Elijah and Elisha erected their own dwellings, and cut down the timber with their own hands. Thus they despised secular riches and favours, and discharged their high office unawed by persecutions and death, which many of them suffered in the most frightful forms.

A.—I have been in the habit of regarding the Prophets separately, rather than as a succession of men raised up from age-to age to fulfil so important a ministry. I thank you for calling my attention to the order of Prophets, if I may so speak ; and I now contemplate them with greater reverence. The disobedience of the Jews to such messengers sent to them in so long a succession, and accredited as they often were with miraculous powers, surely rendered them quite inexcusable.

B.—And you will find that the pious Jews were so impressed with this, that they attributed the overthrow of their city and state to that habitual and obstinate disregard which, with the exception of a few short periods, they showed towards the Prophets of the Lord. Always afraid of the true Prophets, hating them for their fidelity, and infatuated with their passion for heathen superstition and idolatry, they sought for and rewarded those who would “ prophesy to them smooth things ; ” and, as they sought delusion, they were suffered to fall into it. The passage in which their disobedience to the messengers of God is expressed, you will find 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 15—17

A.—I will turn to it. “ And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising betimes and sending.”

B.—That is, continually and carefully sending, as persons rise early to a work of great importance, and on which they have set their heart. But read on.

A.—“ Because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place : But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of God arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age : He gave them all into his hand.”

B.—And does this teach us no lesson ?

A.—It teaches us, by the force of examples so awfully monitory, the great guilt and danger of “ rejecting the word of the Lord.”

B.—You recollect, too, that if the first national destruction of the Jews by the King of Babylon was brought upon them for their disobedience to his Prophets, their rejection of Christ, and the words of his inspired Apostles, led to the “ sorer punishment” of their miserable overthrow by the Romans. The same Prophets, the same great “ Teacher sent from God,” the same Apostles and Evangelists, daily speak unto us, and call us to repentance, faith, and persevering holiness : Let us then attend to those standing and impressive warnings which the history of the Jews exhibits, and pray that we may be enabled to “ give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest an any time we should let them slip.”

CONVERSATION XI.

Saul—*Witch of Endor*—*David*—*Solomon*—*Destruction of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah*—*Samaritans*—*Restoration of Judah*—*Moral State of Judea after the return from the Captivity*—*Second Temple*—*Alexander the Great*—*Jewish Colonies*—*Septuagint*—*Hellenistic Jews*—*Jewish Literature*.

A.—As to the writings of the Prophets, I shall take another opportunity of making some inquiries ; at present, suffer me to ask a few questions which respect circumstances in the history of the Jews in the period subsequent to that of the Judges. Was the evil spirit with which Saul was troubled a diabolical possession ?

B.—Se it would appear ; because Saul is held accountable to God for his actions, which he would not have been, had he been merely insane, as some suppose. The music of David might be of service, even in this case, as calming the animal spirits, and soothing his feelings after those assaults which the evil spirit was permitted to make upon him, and which appear to have expressed themselves in violent paroxysms of anger and jealousy. This was part of his punishment : His obstinate and rebellious disposition had provoked the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord departed from him before “the evil spirit from God,” that is, permitted by God, “troubled him.” Remember that the Spirit of God and the evil spirit cannot dwell in the same breast.

A.—Truly, the subsequent life of Saul presents a most affecting picture of a man forsaken of God.

B.—There was one remedy still, and that was humiliation and prayer ; but his spirit was as unbending and obdurate as it was dark and wretched. It is true, he “inquired of the Lord,” when a great host of Philistines came against him ; but this was not properly an act of prayer, accompanied with confession of his own sin, and that of the people, but merely

inquiring for counsel and direction in a great public danger ; and the historian adds, in words which make one shudder, so awfully do they depict the unhappy case of the forsaken Monarch : “ And the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim,” the breastplate of the High Priest, “ nor by Prophets : ” He had no directing and assuring impressions in sleep ; the oracle of the ark of God was dumb to the inquiries he made by the High Priest ; and of all the Prophets which were in Israel at that time, not one was commissioned by God to bear to him any message of counsel or comfort. In the deep melancholy and desperation which ensued, (and remember how often, and how patiently, and yet fruitlessly, he had been counselled by the venerable Samuel, now no more,) he was seized with a determination to try unlawful arts in order to converse with the disembodied spirit of this faithful adviser, and accordingly applied to a woman who professed the art of raising up and obtaining responses from the spirits of the dead.

A.—But had this wicked woman power to call one of God’s departed servants from his rest ?

B.—Certainly not. If she was not a mere impostor, who obtained credit among the vulgar by artifice, and if her commerce with evil spirits enabled her to do some preternatural things, which she might turn to gainful purposes among those who secretly consulted her, she had no such power as this. The real Samuel appeared, when probably she intended only some deception ; and her “ crying with a loud voice ” when she saw him, proves that she was alarmed by something unexpected by herself, whilst practising her incantations. The whole was a special interposition of God, punishing in Saul the practice of necromancy, which was strictly forbidden in the law ; and warning him of his end, or rather, pronouncing the final sentence upon him, by the appearance of the spirit of Samuel, whose predictions were fully verified by the mournful result.

A.—The dialogue between Saul and Samuel is very moving and pathetic.

B.—It is deeply so ; and the message uttered by Samuel is so much in character, and so manifestly breathes the spirit of a

divine commission, that, containing, as it also does, an explicit prediction, which was exactly accomplished, we must conclude (let loose and sceptical commentators conjecture what they please) that there was no deception here. The account not only shows that the Jews believed in the doctrine of apparitions ; but that in fact such an appearance, on this occasion, did actually occur, which answers all the objections which were ever raised, or can be raised, from the philosophy of the case, against the possibility of the appearance of departed spirits.

A.—You believe, then, in apparitions ?

B.—I believe in this apparition of the departed Samuel, because the text positively calls the appearance “ Samuel :” “ And SAMUEL said, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up ?” Add to this, the account is given in the form of simple narrative, and cannot, therefore, be resolved into poetic fiction ; and, further, a prediction was uttered which was fulfilled. As for apparitions generally, most of the accounts current among men may be resolved into illusion and superstition : Still there are some which rest upon an evidence both of circumstances, and of credit and sobriety in the narrators, which renders it very difficult not to admit them. On this subject I would caution you equally against credulity and unbelief.

A.—David, I presume, is to be accounted the greatest of the Hebrew Monarchs ?

B.—Doubtless ; and his character and conduct, with one or two sad exceptions, which he himself bemoaned with the deepest penitential sorrow, is one on which the mind dwells with the highest admiration. The piety of his youth ; the nobleness of his spirit ; the loftiness and variety of his genius ; his valour, conspicuous in an age of great warriors ; his kindness of heart, and domestic tenderness ; his justice as a ruler ; his appropriate magnificence as a King ; and, above all, his inflexible adherence to the pure worship of God ; are all characters which, from the variety of circumstances in which he moves before us, are placed under the strongest and most interesting developements.

A.—May he not be considered as the founder of Jerusalem?

B.—Considered as the capital city of his kingdom. It was an ancient town and fortress ; and so strong by nature, being almost surrounded with precipitous rocks and deep ravines, that the Jebusites still held possession of it to his day, and had defied all attempts to dispossess them. David achieved the conquest, and then removed his royal residence from Hebron. The situation of Jerusalem was commanding and beautiful ; and the city stood so conveniently for the assembling of the tribes at their great festivals, as to give it the preference to all others as the metropolis. David enlarged it with magnificent buildings ; removed the ark of God in solemn procession, and with the most impressive solemnities ; and made large and ample preparations for the erection of that celebrated temple which was built by Solomon. Thus he at once furnished the nation with a suitable capital, and made provision for the perpetuation and due celebration of the national religion.

A.—He seems also to have enlarged the Jewish territory beyond all former conquests.

B.—He extended it to the furthest limit of the promised land ; so that the Euphrates, called often, by way of eminence, “the river,” became its boundary on the east. He obtained military possession of Edom ; subdued the Moabites ; humbled the Syrians, and held them and the Philistines in awe. Thus he left a most flourishing and powerful kingdom to his son Solomon ; having himself reigned forty years.

A.—Yet his latter days were clouded and troubled.

B.—This shows the impartiality of God, and his hatred of sin. The moral transgression of the law of God was not more tolerated in David than in Saul. The latter, indeed, departed wholly from the Lord ; whilst David, who also fell by temptation, returning to God in penitence and prayer, found his mercy. But though his sin was forgiven, as to its eternal consequences, it had a most severe chastisement in this life. Family afflictions and dissensions, civil strifes, and the unnatural rebellion of Absalom, followed ; and that terrible

threat hung over his race, and darkened all his prospects as to the glory of his family, which was pronounced by one of those intrepid Prophets of whom we have spoken: “The sword shall never depart from thine house.”

A.—This is a sufficient answer to the sneers of infidels at his being called “a man after God’s own heart;” which they profanely interpret into an approval of his entire conduct, instead of his general character.

B.—And like all sneers at sacred things, it shows equal folly and malice. You will ever find the scorner wilfully ignorant; a circumstance which shows that infidelity results not from want of evidence in the Bible, but from a bad heart. Hume, the most subtle and malignant of our infidel writers, confessed that he had never read the Scriptures with attention. Even if he had, the state of his mind would probably have prevented him from seeing their excellence; so greatly does a corrupt heart often enslave the judgment. When men seek error, they are sure to find it.

A.—In what consisted the sin of David in numbering the people?

B.—In his doing it without command from God, and in nourishing perhaps a secret vanity and presumption, when reflecting upon the great increase of the people, and the prosperity of the nation under his government. Pride is rebuked in man, that he may not “trust in himself, but in the living God.” In all things we must give the glory to him.

A.—Even Joab, though a bad man, as appears from his whole conduct, objected to this measure.

B.—True; and this teaches us, that our infirmities and sins, though often hidden from ourselves through self-love, are very obvious to others. The severity of the judgment which fell upon the people, was no doubt designed at once to punish the pride of David, and of the nation too, which was probably more elated by its successes in war and its prosperity, than even its Sovereign. Both were taught that life and all things are in the hands of God; and that this ought to be ever humbly acknowledged by men.

A.—Was there any thing contrary to the spirit of piet

in David advising Solomon, in his last hours, to put Joab and Shimei to death?

B.—Certainly not; for he spoke not as a private man, but as a King and a Judge, whose duty it was to punish such offences as both had been guilty of, as soon as the case would allow of it. It does not, however, appear that he commanded Solomon to put them to death absolutely. He recommended it to him to deal with them “according to his wisdom;” that is, as he should judge circumstances to require, for their lives were already forfeited upon principles of justice; and to take the first opportunity which their factious conduct might afford, to inflict upon them a deserved capital punishment. This, each afterwards brought upon himself; one by actual rebellion, the other by taking suspicious steps to excite it. In this matter the mercy, rather than the severity, of David was manifested. Joab and Shimei deserved death, and yet both were put in circumstances to avoid it by a reformed conduct.

A.—The reign of Solomon was eminently peaceful and prosperous.

B.—The greater part of it, though not the whole. He stands as a fine example to youth, to devote themselves early to God, and to ask of him true wisdom above all things. But his history teaches the young man as forcibly, that, without vigorous perseverance in well-doing, it is not enough to begin life well; and that if once the allurements of sense, and the lusts of the flesh, are yielded to, they will probably cover that character with the deepest shame, which gave the best promise of an honourable course of piety and usefulness. The King who long ruled with so much wisdom and justice, became in his old age an oppressor of his people by his exactions; the man who built the magnificent temple, and offered a prayer as sublime for its theological sentiment, as devout for its feeling, became a base idolater! “He built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem,” as though in studied affront of the majesty of God in the very sight of his temple; “and for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon.”

A.—Is not the Book of Ecclesiastes generally thought to

have been written in the last years of his life, and to be an evidence of his repentance ?

B.—It was more probably written in the middle of life, before he had fully fallen from God ; for it is a testimony of the vanity of all external grandeur and pleasure, independent of the blessing and favour of God. There is nothing specially penitential in this book to support the opinion you have mentioned ; and the probability is, that Solomon's idolatrous infatuation increased with his years. Remember, therefore, that not even religious wisdom, much less human wisdom, can keep man from evil, without watchfulness, self-denial, and prayer.

A.—As David enlarged the territory, so Solomon appears to have increased the commerce, of his country.

B.—Being master of the eastern branch of the Red Sea, his fleets, manned by the Tyrians, sailed to Ophir, or the East Indies. The Tyrians and Phenicians opened to him the commerce of the Mediterranean as far as Tarshish, which is supposed to be the south of Spain ; beside which, he had a great inland trade with Egypt, and another with Assyria and the countries in that direction. The celebrated cities, Palmyra or Tadmor, and Baalath or Balbeck, are supposed to have been built by him. At the close of his life his kingdom, however, became unsettled, and his subjects dissatisfied, and gave indications of that revolt which took place upon the accession of his unwise son Rehoboam, when the twelve tribes were divided into the rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah ; over the latter of which only the descendants of David reigned.

A.—How long did the kingdom of Israel continue ?

B.—Scarcely for three hundred years, through a succession of Kings, for the most part wicked and idolatrous ; and the great mass of people were finally carried away by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, and planted in that empire. The country was then inhabited by a people called Cuthæans, although under that name several other colonies from “ Babylon, and Ava, and Hamath, and Sepharvaim ” were included. These were planted by the Assyrian Monarch in the cities of the

kingdom of Samaria, and were subsequently taught the Jewish religion by a Priest, and in part embraced it; but they mingled with it their own superstitions and idolatries; so “they feared the Lord, and served their own gods.” (2 Kings xvii. 33.) This corrupt form of religion ever afterward distinguished the Samaritans, who, at a subsequent period, built a temple to rival that at Jerusalem. They had, however, the sacred book of the Pentateuch, copies of which, as we have said, are still extant; and they preserved it in great purity. To the Jews the Samaritans would always be an odious people; but the hostility manifested by the latter towards them after their return from Babylon, produced a deadly national and hereditary hatred, which ages did not extinguish. Thus in the time of our Lord, we read, “The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.”

A.—There have been many conjectures, I believe, respecting the places where the ten tribes, who were carried away captive, may still be found existing as a separate and collective people.

B.—Some of them united themselves to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin upon their return from captivity; and that they were mingled with the mass of the Jews both in Judea and other parts of the Roman empire, is plain from the Epistle of St. James, which is inscribed “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.” This is all we know of them. Striking resemblances have, indeed, been traced among the Afghans of India to the physiognomy and customs of the Jews; and their language is also said to bear strong marks of Hebrew origin. But the languages and manners of eastern nations are often in many respects very similar, where, as to their origin, they are quite distinct. No certain evidence has, as yet, been obtained of the existence of the tribes of Israel as a separate people; and that they so exist appears improbable.

A.—How much longer did the kingdom of Judah continue after the carrying away of the ten tribes of Israel by the Assyrians?

B.—Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel, was

taken by Shalmaneser, seven hundred and nineteen years before Christ ; and Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, five hundred and eighty-seven years before Christ.

A.—Which were the leading powers of the world, in those ancient times ?

B.—Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. The Medes and Persians were rising also to eminence. The glory of the Greek states was but in its dawn ; and the Romans were unknown beyond their own contracted territory in Italy.

A.—The captivity in Babylon appears to have had a salutary effect upon the Jews, for we do not find them afterwards turning away from the worship of God to idols.

B.—The judgments which had fallen upon them so falsified the hopes held out by false Prophets, of which you find several instances in the historical Scriptures, and in the Book of Jeremiah ; and so established the influence of the true Prophets of God ; that many of the people, softened by their adversities, appear to have turned to the Lord in truth, during the captivity. The example of Daniel, and the three noble confessors who were miraculously delivered from the terrible death to which they had been sentenced, for refusing to comply with the command of the King of Babylon to worship one of his idols, had no doubt a very beneficial influence. The capture of Babylon, also, by the Medes and Persians, and that in a manner which so exactly fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah ; their own deliverance from captivity at the end of seventy years, by the instrumentality of Cyrus, whose name so long before his birth had been mentioned by Isaiah ; and the open confession of Jehovah as the only true God by Nebuchadnezzar and succeeding Monarchs, in their public decrees, must also have produced a powerful effect ; and, above all, those pious and devoted men whom God raised up among them, as Daniel, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, Ezra, &c., with the Prophets Obadiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah, who lived either during the captivity, or a little subsequently to it, contributed by their zeal, piety, and example, to recover them to the worship of the God of their fathers. With a great and influential leaven of good among them, they were,

however, far from being a fully reformed people, after their restoration.

A.—How does this appear?

B.—The Babylonian empire having been subverted by Cyrus, that Monarch issued an edict for the return of the Jews to their own land, to rebuild their city and temple : The sacred vessels of the temple were also restored. By the influence of the Samaritans the work was, however, impeded ; but on the accession of Darius Hystaspes, the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah urged Zerubbabel to complete it, for which the sanction of the Persian court was obtained. In a subsequent reign, Ezra led forth another body of Jews from Babylon. He found the temple and city built, but without fortifications ; and, what was more afflicting to him, he ascertained that the people had contracted marriages with the surrounding stranger tribes. A few years afterwards Nehemiah, animated by the loftiest spirit of pious patriotism, left his high post at the Persian court to forward a work which, after all, had been but carelessly prosecuted by the people. He roused their spirit and courage, and brought them to labour diligently at the fortifications of Jerusalem, with their weapons of war laid beside them to repel the attacks of the Samaritans, Ammonites, and Arabians ; and he completed the whole with wonderful celerity. He relieved the poor from the oppression of their rapacious nobles ; and, in a solemn assembly, engaged all by oath to observe the law of God. The genealogies of the people were also, under his direction, inquired into and arranged ; and by his wise administration the civil condition of the Jews began to assume the appearance of order and prosperity. At the same time Ezra was diligently employing himself in collecting the sacred books, reading them in public, and giving the sense of the law in Chaldee, which cognate dialect had taken the place of the pure Hebrew during the captivity. Synagogues are supposed by some to have been now established ; by others, and with more probability, that they were merely multiplied at this time. They were of great importance, however, for diffusing religious knowledge among the people, inasmuch as they were not only places of public

worship, but used for the regular reading of the Scriptures ; for which purpose, copies were rapidly multiplied. The books collected by Ezra, and received as the sacred canon by the whole nation, were the Pentateuch, or five Books of Moses ; the historical and prophetical books, as we now receive them ; and the Hagiographa, comprising the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi, were afterwards added, as is generally supposed by critics, in the time of Simon the Just. Thus every provision was made for the instruction of the people, and their preservation from error and idolatry ; and certainly with great effect. But the moral picture which the nation subsequently presented was not very cheering. Much of truth and righteousness appear to have been found in many individuals, and sometimes in the nation ; but great and frequent aberrations from both occurred, which were punished by wars and public calamities. Malachi, the last of the Prophets, who lived about four hundred and twenty years before Christ, reproves the people sharply for various vices, and for a great, and, as it appears, general, disrespect to the worship of God, even after their temple had been rebuilt, and their polity restored. A considerable Jewish party, upon the establishment of the Greek kingdoms in their neighbourhood after the death of Alexander the Great, became infected with Grecian manners, and Grecian idolatry. Jason, one of the High Priests, suffered the services of the temple to fall into disuse, and sent a contribution to the games which were celebrated at Tyre in honour of Hercules. Encouraged in part by the apostate Jews, an attempt was made fully to establish the idolatry of the Greeks, and to prohibit the worship of the true God, by Antiochus Epiphanes, by whose command the Jewish religion was wholly forbidden, and the people obliged to eat swine's flesh, and to profane the Sabbath ; whilst the temple itself was dedicated to Jupiter. During the persecution which ensued, many noble martyrs and confessors of the faith of their ancestors showed themselves, who endured sufferings and death in the most extreme form, rather than pollute themselves with idols ; and the hallowed and patriotic valour of the

family of the Maccabees finally saved their country, and their religion. Still there were many idolatrous traitors to God's cause, and to their country's independence, among them; although, properly speaking, there was no voluntary national relapse into idolatry.

A.—It will be instructive, if you will give me at least a sketch of the Jewish history, from the captivity to the coming of Christ.

B.—You will find an interesting and accurate account of these events in Prideaux's "Connexion of the History of the Old Testament, with that of neighbouring Nations;" but a mere outline may be easily presented. The first great act of the Jews, after their return, was, as we have seen, the rebuilding of their cities, and especially the restoration of Jerusalem and its temple, both of which had been almost rased to the ground.

A.—Was the second temple of equal magnitude and opulence with the first?

B.—It was built upon the old foundations; and was afterwards greatly enriched by the contributions paid annually to it by the Jews of all countries; but at first it was comparatively poor, although many of the sacred vessels were munificently sent back by the Persian Kings. It was inferior to the first in the following important particulars: It wanted the ark; the mercy-seat; the shechinah, or divine presence, manifested by a visible cloud resting upon the mercy-seat; the Urim and Thummim in the breast-plate of the High Priest, of which we know nothing, only that the words signify "light and perfection," and that, by these, intimations of the divine will were sometimes given in cases of national difficulty; and finally, it wanted the holy fire of the altar, which was first kindled from heaven, and was fed by the Priests, day and night, until the capture of the city by the Babylonians.

A.—But did not the Prophet Haggai predict that the second temple should be more glorious than the first?

B.—He did; and since in so many high and sacred particulars it was less glorious, he must have referred to some circumstance not connected with the external splendour of the

second house ; and which, I think, will easily suggest itself to you.

A.—Truly, our blessed Lord himself appeared in this second temple, and often taught in it.

B.—And his visible appearance, as the divine glory and presence incarnate, was an event of which the ancient Shechinah was but a type ; and so the glory of the second house excelled that of the former. But, to proceed : The Jews continued to live under the protection of the Persian Kings, and in a kind of dependence upon the Persian empire, but still governed by their own laws, until its subversion by Alexander the Great. The chief rule of the country, by degrees, devolved upon the High Priest ;—an office which therefore became the object of keen ambition, and often of furious contests among themselves, and of intrigues with foreign Princes, in order to secure their influence. During this period the Jews appear to have been scarcely known to the Greeks ; and they remained in comparative quiet whilst the elements of those convulsions among the nations of the earth, from which they were ultimately to feel their full of change and suffering, were gathering strength at a distance.

A.—Did the mighty Alexander take Judea into his march of victory ?

B.—After having captured and demolished Tyre and Gaza, he appears to have marched towards Jerusalem in great anger, because the Jews thought themselves still bound by their oath of fidelity to Darius. His anger was disarmed by the High Priest Jaddua going forth to meet him with the Priests in their proper habits, and all the people in white garments. They had previously solemnly besought the Lord in prayer, with sacrifices and oblations, and he was pleased to turn the heart of Alexander, who entered pacifically into Jerusalem, and offered sacrifices to God in his temple. It is said that here the High Priest showed to him the Prophecies of Daniel, which predicted the overthrow of the Persian empire by a King of Greece ; and he became so kindly affected to the Jews, that he granted them the freedom of their own laws, and exemption

from tribute every sabbatical or seventh year, in which, according to their law, they neither sowed nor reaped. Alexander, having conquered Egypt, founded Alexandria ; and, in order to encourage its growth and prosperity, induced colonies from different parts to settle there, and among the rest great numbers of Jews, who fixed their residence both in that rising city, and in other parts of Egypt, and had equal civil privileges with the Macedonians.

A.—At this time, Judea appears to have been an appendage to the Macedonian empire : To which, then, of the successors of Alexander did it fall ? for I recollect that his great Generals seized upon and divided his empire among themselves.

B.—At first to Laomedon ; but Ptolemy, King of Egypt, attempting to possess himself of the whole of Syria, conquered Palestine and captured Jerusalem. He carried away one hundred thousand captives into Egypt, and settled them, some in Alexandria, and others in Cyrene. Ptolemy being anxious to promote the prosperity of Alexandria, gave the Jewish captives great privileges, which led many of their brethren in Judea to emigrate thither voluntarily ; so that the number of Jews in Egypt became very great. There they acquired considerable opulence, and many of them were raised to the highest offices, both in the state and in the Græco-Egyptian armies.

A.—I have noticed that the Jews, from this time, seem to have formed no inconsiderable part of the population of many of the ancient and celebrated cities.

B.—Seleucus, another of the successors of Alexander, not content with his large kingdom beyond the Euphrates, seized upon Syria, and established the Syro-Grecian kingdom, of which he made Antioch the capital. He, like many other Princes of that age, was a great builder of cities ; and the method then adopted to people them was, to encourage foreign colonies to settle in them. Seleucus is said to have built sixteen Antiochs, in honour of Antiochus his father ; nine cities called Seleucia, from himself ; six Laodiceas, from Laodice his mother ; three Apameas, from Apama his first wife ; and one

Stratonicea, from Stratonice his last wife. With this Prince the Jews were in great favour, probably because those of them who were in the countries on and beyond the Euphrates, the descendants of the ten tribes which had been transplanted into Assyria, and of the two which had been carried captive into Babylon, where they had greatly multiplied, had adhered to his interests in those provinces where he laid the first foundation of his power. To all his new cities he therefore invited the Jews, giving them equal freedom and immunities with the Greeks and Macedonians ; and especially in Antioch, in Syria, where they settled in great numbers. Hence it was that the Jews became dispersed all over Syria, and Asia Minor, where we find them with their synagogues and assemblies, practising their own religion, and even making proselytes of the Greeks and other Heathens, in the time of the Apostles. In this respect, their dispersion was greatly serviceable to the propagation of Christianity ; for many of these Jews, and the proselytes, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, believed, and formed the first Christian churches. The existence of the Jews in this singular state, both as a nation in Palestine, and widely diffused as colonies in the principal cities of the then civilized world, was doubtless designed by Providence to prepare the way for that great event, the rapid and extensive propagation of Christianity.

A.—And as they appear to have retained the true religion, it is pleasing to contemplate the scene which is thus presented to the mind, the worship of the true God being publicly celebrated for several ages, not only in Judea, but in the most populous and idolatrous cities of the pagan world.

B.—That the power of true piety did not influence the Jews to a great extent, may be allowed ; but yet, as we know there were some truly devout persons in some of these places we may hope that a considerable number existed, who must remain hidden till the resurrection of the just. What light they were the means of spreading among the Heathen, and how many true proselytes were made from idolatry, who came “ to put their trust under the wings of the God of Israel,” to

use their own expressive and beautiful language, are subjects also for future manifestation. In the mean time, there is reason to hope that much moral good was the result of this dispersion of the Jews, not as captives, but as respectable colonists; every where publicly professing their religion, publicly reading their sacred books, and generally protected in the exercise of their worship.

A.—Did they retain their own language?

B.—In Egypt and the Greek cities they adopted the Greek language; although the Hebrew was still preserved, but not as their vernacular tongue. They were therefore called Hellenistic Jews, in distinction from those who spake the Hebrew, (a kind of Chaldaico-Syriac,) and who were called Hebrews.

A.—Had they, then, a translation of the Scriptures into Greek?

B.—They had the version usually called the Septuagint, which was made in Egypt, and respecting which there are several traditions; as, that it was made by command of one of the Ptolemies for his celebrated Alexandrian library, and executed by seventy-two interpreters. The most probable account, however, is, that it was suggested by necessity; the Jews in Egypt rapidly losing their native language, and adopting the Greek. And as they were so numerous there as to have a Sanhedrim, or Great Council, like that in Judea, composed of seventy or seventy-two elders, it was probably executed under their authority, and hence received its name. This version of the holy Scriptures was spread among all the Hellenistic Jews, and read in their synagogues, both in Egypt, where they were very numerous, and in all other places in which they had adopted the Greek language; and thus provision was made, by this great and important work, for the preservation of the knowledge of the word of God among the Jews of the dispersion.

A.—You say the Jews had synagogues in Egypt: Had they not also a temple?

B.—Onias, who was rightful heir to the High Priesthood in Judea, having been wrongfully deprived of this office, fled

to Egypt, and was allowed to dedicate a temple there to the true God. The scruples of the Jews, at the establishment of a rival temple to that of Jerusalem, were overcome by the consideration that Onias was the legitimate High Priest ; and by his application of a prediction in Isaiah xix. 18, 19, that “there should be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt.” This circumstance, and the reading of the law in Greek, gave offence to the stricter Jews of Palestine, who never very cordially acknowledged their Egyptian brethren. The latter, however, continued their annual contributions to the temple at Jerusalem.

A.—I have read of Philo, and other learned and philosophic Alexandrian Jews : I suppose, therefore, that they arose from among the Hellenized Jews of Egypt.

B.—You are correct. The Jews of Palestine do not appear to have been entirely ignorant of the Greek philosophy ; but Alexandria, under its Greek sovereigns, became a celebrated seat of Grecian learning, and long continued to be so. Many of the educated Jews, therefore, turned their attention to Greek literature ; and its philosophy was by them strongly mingled with the Jewish religion. Philo was a Platonized Jewish writer, who lived about the time of Christ.

A.—Now you have glanced at Jewish literature, I will thank you to give me some information respecting the Targums and the Talmud.

B.—The Targums are paraphrases and expositions of the Hebrew text in the Chaldee tongue ; which dialect, you recollect, the Jews chiefly spoke after the captivity : So that, when “the law was read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day,” in pure biblical Hebrew, an explanation was subjoined to it in Chaldee. The oldest extant are those of Onkelos and Jonathan, who are supposed to have lived about the time of Christ. The Talmud, a word which signifies “doctrine,” is a digest of doctrines and precepts relative to religion and morality. It consists of two parts,—the Misna, or text, and the Gemara, or commentary. Misna signifies “repetition,” and consists of various traditions of the Jews and expositions

of Scripture texts. The Gemaras are two,—the Gemara of Jerusalem, and that of Babylon ; one compiled in the third, the other in the sixth, century. Many of these traditions and comments are vain, fanciful, absurd, and monstrously fabulous. To these Jewish writings we must add the apocryphal books, most of which were the productions of Alexandrian Jews ; and some of them, although not canonical, contain very valuable, and sometimes highly eloquent, passages.

CONVERSATION XII.

Persecutions of Antiochus—Maccabees—Pharisees and Sadducees—Pompey—Herod.

A.—BUT I diverted you, in our last conversation, from your historical sketch.

B.—Under the reigns of the three first Ptolemies, the Jews flourished in peace; but it was their lot that their country should become an object of contention between the rival Sovereigns of Egypt and Syria; and it was alternately in possession of each; the internal government, however, being in the hands of the High Priest. It belonged to Syria on the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes, under whose bigoted and sanguinary reign, as I before said, an attempt was made wholly to exterminate its religion. To luxury, pride, and gross sensuality, this abandoned Sovereign added a furious bigotry for his idolatrous faith; and he determined to establish uniformity of worship throughout his dominions. I have mentioned his violent dedication of the temple of God to Jupiter, and also that many instances of heroic martyrdom were exhibited. Two women, who, in defiance of the tyrant's prohibition, had circumcised their children, were led through Jerusalem with their children hanged round their necks; and were then cast down from the steepest part of the walls: And with the same severity were all treated who continued to practise their ancient rites, and refused to conform to idolatry. Eleazar, a scribe, ninety years of age, died nobly confessing his faith, exhorting the young, also, to die courageously "for the honourable and holy laws." And Josephus gives a most affecting relation of seven brethren, who, encouraged by their devout and heroic mother, endured the most excruciating torments, rather than sacrifice to idols. The same barbarities were practised throughout the country; the wor-

ship of God was every where interdicted ; the people massacred, or brutally treated ; and, to crown the whole, the impure orgies of Bacchus were substituted for the feast of tabernacles.

A.—What was the result ?

B.—The rescue of the country, and its restoration to civil independence, by the hallowed patriotism of the family of the Maccabees ;—a family of heroes and confessors, justly held in grateful remembrance by the Jews of all succeeding ages for their piety, valour, and enterprise, and for the services they rendered their nation. The First Book of Maccabees, inserted in the Apocrypha, is an accurate history of their exploits ; written probably in the time of John Hyrcanus, when the wars in which they distinguished themselves were terminated. The Second Book is not so much to be depended upon ; but contains some interesting, and, in substance, authentic particulars. To these Books I refer you for the history of this period. John Hyrcanus fully threw off the Syrian yoke, and Judea remained independent until it fell under the dominion of the Romans.

A.—Was not this Hyrcanus a vigorous and successful Prince ?

B.—Under him the nation greatly flourished ; and he subdued the rival state of Samaria, and added it to his kingdom ; totally destroying the chief city, and the rival temple on Mount Gerizim. He entered, also, into a treaty, offensive and defensive, with the Romans.

A.—Do not the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees begin about this time to appear in the Jewish history ?

B.—They present themselves not only as religious distinctions, but as powerful political factions. Their origin is obscure : The Sadducees are traced to Sadoc, who lived about two hundred and sixty years before Christ. They rejected all traditions, and professed to adhere to the plain letter of Scripture ; but they denied the resurrection of the body, the existence of angels and spirits ; and, as some say, both fate and providence. They show the influence of the heathen philo-

sophy upon many of the educated part of the Jews, in consequence of their intercourse with the Greek kingdoms, with which, from the time of Alexander, their country became politically connected ; and they may be considered among the Jews, as the Socinians among ourselves, the assertors of the baneful principle, that the Scriptures are to be admitted, rejected, and interpreted according to our own rational views of the subjects they contain, instead of employing reason, in its own proper office, to discover their meaning by diligent reading, and comparing one part with another. The sect of the Sadducees was confined chiefly to the higher ranks of society. The Pharisees were by far the most numerous and popular sect.

A.—Why were they so called ?

B.—From the Hebrew word *pharash*, which signifies “separated,” or “set apart ;” because they separated themselves from the rest of the Jews to superior strictness in religious observances, even to the most minute particulars of ceremonial exactness, partly founded on the law, but more frequently upon traditions, of which they held the divine authority ; and of which, from age to age, like the Roman Catholics, who also boast of traditions, they increased the number. They held a kind of predestination, yet not so as wholly to take away free-will. They strenuously contended against the Sadducees for the doctrines of the existence of spiritual beings, and the resurrection of the body. They held the merit of works, and therefore attempted to perform those of supererogation ; that is, such as the law itself had not required. They were strenuous maintainers, also, of the temporal reign of Messiah, and flattered the pride of the nation, by holding out the hope, that at his coming he would subdue all nations under their feet.

A.—They appear to me to have been imitated very much by the Roman Catholics.

B.—Popery is compounded of corrupted Judaism, corrupted Christianity, and Paganism ; one predominating in one portion of the system, and another in others. But it is more impor-

tant to observe, that the Pharisees succeeded in corrupting the ancient doctrine of the Jewish Church by the fatal operation of two of their leading principles,—the merit of works to procure justification, and the worldly dominion of the Messiah. The first led them to reject the doctrine of faith in Messiah's sacrificial death, through which all the ancient saints, in all ages, had sought justification before God; and the second brought them necessarily to deny, that Messiah would suffer or die for any purpose, as incompatible with an advent which they expected to be ushered in by signs from heaven, and to lead to the restoration of their country to the highest dominion. Before these errors, the typical and evangelical character of the Mosaic institutions entirely vanished away; the ceremonial law was deprived of its meaning, and sacrifices were converted from acts of faith into works of legal obedience; the performance of which went to swell the supposed merits of the offerer, and to secure his acceptance, on the ground of his personal righteousness, as manifested by his strict ceremonial observances. Notions of the perpetuity of the Mosaic institutions, human meritoriousness, and a worldly redemption, began from this time to prevail among the Jews every where, under the influence of Pharisaism; and will easily account to you for the ill reception which the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles met with among them in general, and among the Pharisees in particular.

A.—This removes a difficulty which I have sometimes felt in attempting to account for the absence, among the Jews of our Lord's time, of all apparent acquaintance with the doctrine of salvation by faith in an atonement prefigured by the sacrifices of the law which they still continu'd to offer. I now see that such views and the tenets of Pharisaism were entirely incompatible; and that from the great influence of the Pharisaic system upon the body of the people for near three centuries, the doctrines of the Jewish Church must have been awfully obscured and perverted.

B.—You have rightly conceived the case. But to proceed with the leading public events of Judea: In the contests for

the chief power in Judea, which occurred among the descendants of John Hyrcanus, the Romans began decidedly to interfere. Pompey the Great, in supporting one of these Princes against another, besieged and took the city and the temple. The proud Roman pressed even into the Holy of Holies, and was surprised to find no statue or symbol of the Deity there. The temple was then immensely rich ; for though its treasures had often been seized, they were always replenished by the voluntary offerings of the Jews throughout the world. Pompey, however, nobly respected them, and placed Hyrcanus, a descendant of John Hyrcanus, in the chief government as High Priest, but without the regal diadem. Gabinius, a Roman Commander, afterwards deprived the High Priest of his civil authority ; but it was restored to him by Julius Cæsar for the part he took in his favour, in the great contest between him and Pompey, which divided and convulsed the whole Roman empire. Afterwards Antigonus, the last remaining branch of the Asmonean race, seized the sovereignty ; but he was dethroned and killed by the Romans, who supported Herod, afterwards called the Great, and who was the last independent Sovereign of Judea. The attachment of the Jews to the race of their Asmonean Princes rendered Herod's possession of the throne, as an Idumean, insecure, although he had married into the Asmonean family ; and he only sustained his power by many intrigues, and by murdering several of the members of the rightful royal family. He made, however, successful court to Augustus Cæsar, and was confirmed in his sovereignty by him. His mind was rendered dark and melancholy by his family vexations, and by a deeply troubled conscience, pressed by the weight of his many crimes ; and his character, as well as his imitation of Roman manners and heathen customs, alienated still farther from him the affections of the Jews. To flatter and conciliate them, he added to many other splendid buildings, the rebuilding of their temple, on a scale of great magnificence. It was in the reign of this suspicious and sanguinary Prince, that our Lord was born ; and the order to destroy the children of Bethlehem, was at once accordant with his sanguinary character, and with

the feelings of a mind, kept in the torments of jealousy by the conspiracies against him which were springing up among the members of his own family, and by his knowledge of the general dislike which was felt towards him by the Jews. At length he died, worn out by painful diseases ; and with the blood of his own wife, his sons, and other relatives, as well as that of the innocents of Bethlehem, upon his tortured conscience.

CONVERSATION XIII.

*Hebrew Verse—Figurative and symbolical Language of the Prophets—
Prophetic Style.*

A.—I THANK you for thus tracing the leading links of the chain of events which connects the Old and the New Testaments : I will now request you to answer me some questions with respect to the book of Job, the Psalms, and the writings of the Prophets. They are, with a few others, I observe, sometimes called “the Poetical Books” of the Old Testament ; but they have not the form of verse, although I perceive that their language is highly elevated, figurative, and indeed richly poetical.

B.—You will be sensible, however, in reading them, of a rhythm, and an approach to some kind of measure. That they are written in verse, all the learned are agreed ; although the harmony does not arise from rhyme, that is, from the termination of the verses in corresponding sounds ; but probably from metres, the laws of which are now unknown. There is also observable a correspondence of verses to each other, so that they may be divided and placed parallel to each other. This arrangement has been made by some translators ; and the parallels, so formed, have, according to their construction, received different appellations. However, to explain the matter generally, it will be sufficient to give you a specimen of what they have called gradational parallel, in which the second or responsive clause so diversifies the preceding one as generally to rise above it, forming a sort of climax :—

“ Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found ;
Call ye upon him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts ;
And let him return to Jehovah, and he will compassionate him,
And unto our God, for he aboundeth in forgiveness.”

This is Bishop Lowth's translation of a passage in Isaiah lv. 6, 7, on which Bishop Jebb remarks : " In the first line, men are incited to seek Jehovah on the bare intelligence that he may be found ; in the second, they are encouraged to call upon him, by the assurance that he is near ; in the third line, the wicked is warned to forsake his way ; in the fourth, the unrighteous to renounce the very thought of sinning ; in the last line, the compassion of God, mentioned in the fifth, is heightened into overflowing mercy and forgiveness." Of other kinds of parallelism, such as present an anti-climax, or anti-thesis or opposition, as

" The memory of the just is blessed ;
But the name of the wicked shall rot ; "

the poetical books of the Hebrews afford very numerous instances ; for which, and other peculiarities, you may consult Lowth on Isaiah, and Jebb's " Sacred Literature." You will, from the instances given, form a general idea of the structure of Hebrew verse.

A.—The style, too, of the Hebrew poets appears to be figurative and bold beyond that of any other human writers.

B.—It has all the splendour and sublimity, the softness and beauty, of the oriental writers, without their exaggerations on the one hand, and their languor and voluptuousness on the other. This is itself a strong proof of what I before said, that, although the general genius of the east is seen in these inimitable compositions, and the different characters of the genius and taste of each individual are also conspicuous, yet is it manifest that the whole mind of every writer was in the hand and under the guidance of a superior power. But as the Prophets especially use not only figurative but also symbolical language, it will be necessary for you to become somewhat acquainted with the elements, so to speak, of that rich, picturesque, and often typical, style, in which they address us.

A.—I wait for your illustrations.

B.—Nature is the great source from which the Hebrew poets, like all others, derive all their images ; but the symbol-

ical character which they give to many natural objects, is generally peculiar to themselves, and results from their inspiration. The sun, moon, and stars, the highest objects in the natural world, figuratively represent Kings, Queens, Princes, or rulers, or the kingdoms themselves which they govern ; their increase of splendour denotes growing prosperity ; their being darkened by eclipses, or their setting, the reverses of their condition : “ I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark ; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.” (Ezek. xxxii. 7.) Earthquakes, too, and the shaking of heaven and earth, are used to express commotions in kingdoms, or their entire overthrow. The sun stands as the emblem of Messiah, and light for the knowledge and joy which his doctrine should diffuse. Light and darkness are further used for joy or sorrow, prosperity or adversity : “ We wait for light, but behold obscurity ; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.” (Isaiah lix. 9.) Dews, moderate rain, gentle streams, and running, or, as the Hebrews called them, living waters, denote prosperity in general, and are especially used to express the blessings of the Gospel : So in Isaiah xliv. 3 ; a passage in which we have an instance of the parallelism just mentioned :—

“ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty,
And floods upon the dry ground ;
I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed,
And my blessing upon thy offspring.”

A.—I observe that the second couplet explains the figurative language of the first ; the copious effusion of waters in the former, signifying the Spirit and the blessing mentioned in the latter.

B.—But on the other hand, immoderate rains and destructive floods represent God’s overwhelming judgments : “ I will rain upon him an overflowing rain, and great hailstones.” (Ezek. xxxviii. 22.) Fire also, whirlwinds, and the east wind, or the suffocating and withering simoon, are all emblems of destruction : “ The wind shall eat up all thy pleasures.” (Jer. xxii. 22.) High mountains and lofty hills denote states

and cities ; the cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Bashan stand for potentates and persons of the highest rank ; and towers and fortresses for powerful protectors. Lebanon, indeed, which was remarkable for its stately cedars and for its own loftiness, is used for any thing great and noble ; and Mount Carmel, which abounded in vines and olives, denoted beauty and fertility : “ The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellency of Carmel.” The vine and the vineyard are constant images of the Jewish Church. But the treading of the wine-press denotes extreme punishment, the crushing of nations under the weight of the divine vengeance, and the effusion of blood. A horn is the emblem of strength and dignity, sometimes of pride ; and a rod, of royalty. Rams, bulls, lions, eagles, sea-monsters, and other creatures of pugnacious or ravenous habits, are used for cruel tyrants and conquerors : “ Hear this, ye kine of Bashan, which oppress the poor.” “ The lion is come up from his thicket.” (Jer. iv. 7.) “ A great eagle came from Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar.” (Ezek. xvii. 3.)

A.—The splendid religious services of their country, I have also observed, afford the Prophets many interesting and expressive images.

B.—And they were the more expressive, as they were not mere poetic ornaments ; but in many instances established types of the subjects to which they refer. Hence, from the temple, the Shechinah, the mercy-seat, the sacrifices, and purifications, and the splendid garments of the High Priest, a variety of images are drawn serving to denote the glory of the Christian church, God’s presence with it, and his favour towards it : “ And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a fire by night ; for upon all the glory shall be a covering.” (Isaiah iv. 5.) “ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) “ I clothed thee with broidered work.” “ He clothed me with garments of salvation.” (Isaiah lxi. 10.)

A.—Their striking and miraculous history would also, I presume, furnish them with figurative allusions.

B.—The Exodus from Egypt is frequently made use of to express other great deliverances of the Jewish nation, and also of the Christian church: “Thus saith the Lord, who maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.” (Isaiah xlivi. 16, &c.) The descent on Sinai supplies also the imagery of many noble passages, as, “Behold, the Lord cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth; and the mountains shall be molten under him.” Earlier events, also, are often alluded to; as, the destruction of the Canaanites, of the cities of the plain, the general deluge, and the chaotic state of the earth at its creation: “I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.” (Jer. iv. 23.) To these may be added, the fall of man, and of the evil angels: “Thou hast been in Eden, in the garden of God. Thou art the anointed cherub; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God.” (Ezek. xxviii. 14.) “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isaiah xiv. 12;) where the Prophet speaks of the fall of the proud King of Babylon, under this bold allusion to the fall of Satan. The doctrine of the resurrection also supplies many figures by which the restoration of the Jews, and the revivals of religion in the church, are represented; as in Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones.

A.—Metaphors taken from husbandry I also have noticed to abound.

B.—Those of ploughing, sowing, and reaping, are frequent and obvious; but to understand some vigorous passages in which thrashing is introduced, you must recollect that this was generally, though not always, done by treading out the corn from the husk, by the feet of oxen, upon an elevated place, where the wind might take away the chaff: “Arise and thrash, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and thy hoofs brass.” (Micah iv. 13.) “Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them.” (Isaiah xli. 16.) The pastoral images are very beautiful and tender: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he

leadeth me beside the still waters." (Psalm xxiii.) Under the character of a shepherd, Isaiah also speaks of Messiah, in the following exquisite passage : " He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." The outward expressions of mourning were shaving the head and beard, rending the garments, retiring to the house-tops, (which were all flat,) and there pouring out lamentations. Dirges and laments, accompanied by a wailing kind of music, were also in use at funerals ; and these circumstances are also often introduced by the Prophets into their pictures of national distress : " Every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped ; there shall be lamentation on all the house-tops of Moab." Corn being ground, in those early days, chiefly in hand-mills, by female slaves sitting on the ground, explains the apostrophe of Isaiah : " Descend and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon ; take the mill-stones," &c. The marriage relation supplied metaphors to express the covenant between God and his people ; and hence idolatry and other superstitions are so often, by the Prophets, called by the terms, adultery and fornication, by which the marriage covenant is violated. It is also one of those bold images so frequent in the Prophets, to represent the terrible effects of the divine judgments upon a people by the stupefaction caused by intoxicating liquors : " Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness, with the cup of thy sister Samaria." (Ezek. xxiii. 33.) For further elucidations I must refer you to those who have written upon Hebrew poetry ; but this may be sufficient to give you a general view of the sources from which the Prophets especially drew their imagery. If I point out also a few passages which will give you an idea of the beauty, richness, and grandeur of their compositions, it may draw your attention to this interesting part of holy writ. The poets of Palestine soar far beyond the most admired geniuses of Paganism ; and the most vigorous conceptions of Homer and Virgil are tame and puerile when compared with those of the Hebrew Prophets.

A.—In this I shall be greatly interested ; as I doubt

not you will point out these particulars with truth and judgment.

B.—My credit will not be great ; as I shall do little more than furnish you with a few specimens, chiefly suggested by the criticisms of men of taste and learning on these majestic books of holy Scripture. Turn, then, to Isaiah v., where, after the Jews have been reproached for various sins, their offended God threatens them with his judgments. Read verse 13, where captivity and famine appear with all their horrors, and the threatened calamity is spoken of in the past tense, according to the manner of the Prophets, to denote its certainty.

A.—“Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge ; and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.”

B.—“Hell,” meaning hades, or the grave, like a ravenous monster, opens wide its jaws, and swallows down its myriads. (Verse 14.)

A.—“Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure ; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.”

B.—Distress lays hold on all ranks, and God is glorified in his judgments, until the whole land is left desolate, a place for flocks to range in. (Verses 15—17.)

A.—“And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled ; but the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.”

B.—After several other reproofs and threatenings, the God of armies, having hitherto corrected to no purpose, is represented, with inimitable majesty, as only lifting up his ensign, and hissing to the nations, when the hostile legions, like swarms of insects, fly to his standard ; and keen, cruel, and resolute, they hasten to perform his will upon a guilty race, and leave the land desolate and dark, without a ray of comfort to cheer the gloom. (Verses 26—30.)

A.—“And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far,

and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth ; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly : None shall be weary nor stumble among them ; none shall slumber nor sleep : Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent ; their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind : They shall roar like the young lion, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it. And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea ; and if one look unto the land, behold, darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof."

B.—From this scene of terror and gloom, proceed now to the following chapter, (vi.,) which describes the designation of Isaiah to his office.

A.—“ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: Each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

“ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts : The whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

“ Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips ; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

B.—This prophetic vision is peculiarly glorious. “ The most pompous machinery of the Greek and Latin poets is as much inferior to it as earth is to heaven, or things human to things divine. Observe the personages ; they are the very highest in the scale of created beings, the dominions and principalities of heaven :—Their attitude ; they stand before the throne of Jehovah, veiling their faces from the beams of

uncreated glory, too bright for the seraphim themselves to endure :—Their action ; the most rapturous songs of praise :—Their manner of expression ; re-iterated and reverential acclamations of ‘ Holy, holy, holy ! ’—The effects of this awful presence, and of these august sounds ; the posts of the door shake ; the ponderous and magnificent pillars of brass (2 Chron. iii. 17) tremble as a leaf before the blast of the desert. The temple, too, involved in smoke, joins with trembling columns and adoring seraphs to bid the thoughtless world stand in awe of God ! ”

In the thirteenth chapter the destruction of Babylon is foretold, and the very name of the conquerors, the Medes, is mentioned ; then but a very insignificant people. Of this chapter read the tenth and the thirteenth verses.

A.—“ For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light ; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.”

B.—Read also the concluding verses.

A.—“ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation : Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there ; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces,” &c.

B.—Here, you observe, God himself is introduced in person, declaring, by a variety of the most striking images, the destruction of Babylon, and the everlasting desolation of that great city. Never was a description of any object of terror worked up to such a pitch as this, even to the falling of the stars, and the removing of the earth out of its place. And in about two hundred years the prophecy was accomplished.

This great city, “the glory of kingdoms,” sixty miles in compass, inclosed with a wall, by the lowest account, two hundred feet high, and fifty broad, so that six chariots could drive abreast on it ; fortified every where with towers, and secured by a hundred gates of brass ; a city whose beauty, strength, and grandeur, whose temples, palaces, and hanging-gardens, were the wonder of the world, became as the ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah. All is mouldered into dust, and sunk into a morass ; and, as the Prophet foretold, the place where it stood is occupied with all manner of wild beasts and serpents : And thus it must ever continue ; for it is doomed never to be inhabited. The few masses of ruins which remain the Arabs call by an expressive name which signifies “overturned.” When we compare such predictions with the event, what awful ideas do they give of God ! what loud warnings to fear his judgments !

The prediction as to Babylon is followed in the fourteenth chapter by a triumphant ode. Turn to the passage, which commences at the fourth verse.

A.—“Thou shalt take up this proverb against the King of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased ! the golden city ceased ! The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet : They break forth into singing. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming : It stirreth up the dead for thee even all the chief ones of the earth : It hath raised up from their thrones all the Kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we ? Art thou become like unto us ? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols : The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning ! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations ! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north : I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like

the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms ; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof ; that opened not the house of his prisoners ? All the Kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit ; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people : The seed of evil doers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers ; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water : And I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

B.—The scenes, speakers, and transitions of this ode, have been well pointed out by Lowth and Michaëlis, in the extract which I shall now read :—

“A chorus of Jews is first introduced, expressing their surprise and astonishment at the sudden downfal of Babylon, and its oppressive tyrant. The harassed kingdoms, and their rulers, denoted by the fir-trees and cedars of Lebanon, shout with joy, and the whole earth and its productions raise their voice along with them over the fallen tyrant ; and vaunt of their security, now he is no more. The scene is then changed, and a new set of persons introduced : The regions of the dead are laid open, and Hades is represented as rousing up the shades of the departed monarchs. They rise from their thrones to meet the King of Babylon on his arrival, and insult him on his being reduced to the same abject condition with themselves. This is one of the boldest figures ever attempted in poetry, and is executed with astonishing brevity, perspicuity, and force. You

are to form to yourself an idea of an immense subterraneous vault, a vast gloomy cavern, all around the sides of which there are cells, in the manner of the Jewish sepulchres, to receive the dead bodies: Here the deceased monarchs lie in a distinguished sort of state, suitable to their former rank, each on his own couch, with his arms beside him, and his chiefs around him. These illustrious shades rise at once from their couches, and advance to the entrance of the cavern to meet the King of Babylon, and to insult him on his fall. The Jews now resume the speech: They address the King of Babylon as the morning-star fallen from heaven, the first in splendour and dignity, fallen from his high state: They introduce him as uttering the most extravagant vaunts of his power and ambitious designs in his former glory, which are strongly contrasted in the close with his present low condition. Immediately follows a different scene, happily imagined to diversify the same subject: Certain persons are introduced who light upon the corpse of the King of Babylon, cast out and lying on the bare ground; so disfigured among the common slain, that it is some time before they know him. They accost him with the severest taunts, bitterly reproach him with his destructive ambition, which brought upon him so ignominious an end, and leave him with execrating his name, race, and posterity. To complete the whole, God is introduced declaring the fate of Babylon, the utter extirpation of the royal family, and the total desolation of the city; the deliverance of his people, and the destruction of his enemies; confirming the irreversible decree by the awful sanction of his oath.

“ The images of this ode are so various, so numerous, and so sublime, expressed with such force, in such elevated words, figures, and sentences, that it is impossible to conceive any thing of the kind more perfect. We hear the voices of the Jews, the cedars of Lebanon, the King of Babylon, the ghosts of departed Monarchs, and those who find the King’s corpse; and we behold each of them acting his respective part, as it were in some well-cast drama. The persons are numerous, but not confused; bold, but not extravagant; a noble, sublime, and truly divine spirit glows in every sentence; nothing can

be found deficient, nothing redundant ;—in a word, for beauty of disposition, strength of colouring, greatness of sentiment, brevity, perspicuity, and force of expression, this ode of Isaiah stands among all the monuments of antiquity unrivalled."

The style of Jeremiah is also exceedingly beautiful and tender ; and, towards the close of his prophecies, he ascends to the majesty of Isaiah.

A.—Be pleased to point out a passage or two in illustration.

B.—You may turn to chapter xlvi. ; which contains a prophecy delivered previous to the great battle fought by Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar, in which the Egyptians were routed with great slaughter. The Prophet sees the mighty but vain preparations of the Egyptian warriors. (Verses 3—6.)

A.—“Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle. Harness the horses ; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets ; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines. Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back ? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back : For fear was round about, saith the Lord. Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape ; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates.”

B.—The King of Egypt is, however, represented as marching with all the confidence of victory, like a river overflowing its banks. (Verses 7, 8.)

A.—“Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers ? Egypt riseth up as a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers ; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth ; I will destroy the city, and the inhabitants thereof.”

B.—The voice of Pharaoh is heard animating his troops to the battle. (Verse 9.)

A.—“Come up, ye horses ; and rage, ye chariots ; and let the mighty men come forth ; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield ; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow.”

B.—The Prophet, however, announces to him, that this is the time and place destined by God for the entire overthrow and destruction of his host ; and in the description, the sword itself is personified ; it devours, and satiates itself, and is made drunk with blood. (Verse 10.)

A.—“ For this is the day of the Lord God of Hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries : And the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood : For the Lord God of Hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.”

B.—Finally : The wound inflicted upon Egypt is without cure, although the balm of Gilead, the most sanative medicine known in that day, were applied to it. (Verse 11.)

A.—“ Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt : In vain shalt thou use many medicines ; for thou shalt not be cured.”

B.—As a further specimen of Jeremiah’s manner, we may take the forty-eighth chapter, which contains prophecies concerning the Moabites and other neighbouring nations, who fell under the irresistible sweep of the power of Nebuchadnezzar. This whole chapter is poetry of the first order. It opens with the distress of the cities of Moab, which fell successively under the power of the invader. The cry of one city taken and sacked resounds to that of another ; the wailing of the children is also touchingly introduced ; the highways resound with cries of trouble ; and the country, swept of its inhabitants, is left like the heath of the desert. (Verses 1—6.)

A.—“ Against Moab thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel ; Woe unto Nebo ! for it is spoiled : Kiria-thaim is confounded and taken : Misgab is confounded and dismayed. There shall be no more praise of Moab : In Heshbon they have devised evil against it ; come, and let us cut it off from being a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen ; the sword shall pursue thee. A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction. Moab is destroyed ; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard. For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up ; for in the going down of Horonaim the

enemies have heard a cry of destruction. Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness."

B.—The folly of trusting in idols is next forcibly portrayed; their great idol Chemosh himself is carried into captivity, with his whole retinue of priests, and the Princes of the people. (Verse 7.)

A.—"For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: And Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together."

B.—Wings are then scornfully ordered for Moab, as her only chance of escape; and the victors are heard animating each other in the pursuit, and imprecating curses on the man who executes his work with slackness. (Verses 9, 10.)

A.—"Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: For the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein. Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood."

B.—The subject is diversified by the introduction of a spirited comparison taken from old wine long left undisturbed, and thus acquiring strength and flavour; by which is indicated the pride and insolence produced in the Moabites by long prosperity. (Verses 11—13.)

A.—"Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: Therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles. And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their confidence."

B.—All prosperity is now declared to be at an end, and the neighbouring states are called to sing the lament at his obsequies. (Verses 16, 17.)

A.—"The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. All ye that are about him, bemoan

him ; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod !”

B.—And lest any of the cities of Moab should flatter themselves with the hope of an exemption from this calamity, the Prophet represents the inhabitants of Aroer and Arnon, the extreme borders of Moab, eagerly inquiring of the trembling fugitives, male and female, “ What is done ?” to which the answer is, that the destruction is universal upon all parts of the kingdom, and upon all its cities. (Verses 19—24.)

A.—“ O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy ; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done ? Moab is confounded ; for it is broken down : Howl and cry ; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled. And judgment is come upon the plain country ; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, and upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Beth-diblathaim, and upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-meon, and upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.”

B.—The severity of this fearful visitation of the divine judgment is then heightened by various images. Moab is seen as the object of contempt and derision, like a reeling drunkard. (Verses 25, 26.)

A.—“ The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the Lord. Make ye him drunken : For he magnified himself against the Lord : Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.”

B.—The enemy falls upon the summer fruits, so that the rejoicings of the harvest cease, and shouting is no longer heard in the fields ; the public services of religion cease, and one dark affliction is spread over the whole land. (Verses 33, 35.)

A.—“ And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab ; and I have caused wine to fail from the wine-presses : None shall tread with shouting ; their shouting shall be no shouting. Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the Lord, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods.”

B.—Thus, in these and other of the prophecies of Jere-

miah, found in the close of his Book, this Prophet falls but little short of the spirit, variety, and sublimity of Isaiah himself.

A.—The Lamentations of Jeremiah over the sad accomplishment of his own predictions in the destruction of Jerusalem, preserve all their pathos to the present day.

B.—“He witnessed all the horrors of the famine, and, when that had done its work, the triumph of the enemy. He saw the strong-holds of the city cast down ; the palace of Solomon, the temple of God, with all its courts, its roofs of cedar and gold, levelled to the earth, or committed to the flames ; the sacred vessels, the ark of the covenant itself, with the cherubim, pillaged by profane hands. What were the feelings of a patriotic and religious Jew at this tremendous crisis, he has left on record in his unrivalled elegies. Never did city suffer a more miserable fate ; never was ruined city lamented in language so exquisitely pathetic. Jerusalem is, as it were, personified, and bewailed with the passionate sorrow of private and domestic attachment ; while the more general pictures of the famine, the common misery of every rank, and age, and sex, all the desolation, the carnage, the violation, the dragging away into captivity, the remembrance of former glories, of the gorgeous ceremonies, and the glad festivals, the awful sense of the divine wrath heightening the present calamities, are successively drawn with all the life and reality of an eye-witness. They combine the truth of history with the deepest pathos of poetry.”* Of the truth of this remark, the following passages will afford sufficient proof. Under what a variety of affecting views is the calamity presented, and how deep is the tone of sorrow which pervades the whole ! “How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger ! And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden : He hath destroyed his places of the assembly ; the Lord hath caused

* Milman.

the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised, in the indignation of his anger, the King and the Priest. Her gates are sunk unto the ground ; He hath destroyed and broken her bars ; her King and her Princes are among the Gentiles ; the law is no more ; her Prophets also find no vision from the Lord. The Elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence : They have cast up dust upon their heads ; they have girded themselves with sackcloth : The virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground. Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people ; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine ? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mother's bosom. What thing shall I take to witness for thee ? What thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem ? What shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion ? for thy breach is great like the sea ; who can heal thee ? All that pass by clap their hands at thee ; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call, The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth ? ”

A.—Are not the writings of Ezekiel considered obscure ?

B.—Often so ; but on the obscurity of prophecy I will speak presently. The sublimity of Ezekiel is of the kind which is sometimes called the terrible ; it is at least often calculated to fill the mind with the deepest awe. The vision, in the first chapter, which you may peruse at your leisure, is of this description. The Prophet here receives his commission, and has a symbolical vision of the glory of God. A firmament likened to the colour of the terrible crystal, from its intense brightness, stretches above the heads of cherubim, having symbolic forms denoting boldness, activity, intelligence, and heavenly-mindedness ; these celestial beings, glowing with the splendour of heaven, “ run and return as the appearance of lightning.” The office assigned them is that of attending

the chariot of God's providential march among the nations of the earth. The wheels are awfully lofty in their sweep, complicated in their motions, so as to appear often "a wheel within a wheel ;" but they are "full of eyes," to show that every motion is directed by infallible intelligence. A mighty spirit, too, is in the whole ; and wherever it moves, accompanied by the cherubim, the noise of their wings is "like the noise of many waters, as the voice of the Almighty, as the voice of speech, as the noise of a host ;" simile after simile suggesting itself to the mind of the Prophet, to express the rush of mighty and irresistible energy, and of rapid and unwearied service. But the picture is not finished : Above the firmament appears the throne of God, managing and directing those wondrous motions which are performed in a lower region ; and on the throne "the likeness of a man," an anticipation of our Lord's entrance into his glory, to whom "all power is given in heaven and in earth," and about the throne a rainbow of intense brightness, crowning the whole with the beauteous symbol of the covenant of mercy.

A.—Well might the Prophet "fall upon his face" before so glorious a vision ; a vision, too, which, as you have opened it, suggests the most profound and overwhelming thoughts.

B.—If you turn to the twenty-sixth chapter, you will find a prophecy of the destruction of the celebrated mercantile and opulent Tyre ; a city which had been enriched by the long and gainful commerce of the old world. It was taken nineteen years afterwards by Nebuchadnezzar ; but a part of the inhabitants retired to an island half a mile from the shore, where they built New Tyre, which was afterwards captured by Alexander the Great. The prophecy respects both, and expresses particular circumstances of the calamity, all of which were afterwards exactly accomplished, with wonderful force and graphic effect. We seem to see the Babylonian host raising the mounds, setting the engines, and shaking the walls ; we hear the noise of horsemen, and the sound of chariots ; we see the clouds of smoke and dust ; the sword appears bathed in blood, and the groans of the dying fall upon the ear. "He

shall cast up a mount against thee, and shall set engines of war against thy walls, and shall break down thy towers. By reason of the abundance of his horses, their dust shall cover thee ; thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates.” Tyre then immediately disappears ; her towers sink into the earth, and her very dust is buried in the sea : Nothing remains but the bare rock. “ They shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses ; and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard ; and I will make thee like the top of a rock. Thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon : Thou shalt be built no more : For I, the Lord, have spoken it.” But read the latter part of the chapter, from the fifteenth verse to the end.

A.—“ Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus ; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee ? Then all the Princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments ; They shall clothe themselves with trembling ; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it ! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall ; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord God ; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited ; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee ; when I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited ; and I shall set glory in the land of the living ; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more ;

Though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God."

B.—How striking is this scene ! "The isles and adjacent regions shake, as with a mighty earthquake, by the concussion occasioned by the fall of Tyre. The groans of the dying reach the ears of the people inhabiting those regions. Their Princes, alarmed for themselves, and afflicted for Tyre, descend from their thrones, and clothe themselves—with sack-cloth ? No ; but 'with trembling !' Arrayed in this astonishing attire, the Prophet introduces them as a chorus of mourners, lamenting Tyre, in a funeral song or dirge, as customary on the death of renowned personages. And, pursuing the same image still farther, she is brought forth from her place in solemn pomp ; the pit is dug deep for her, and she is buried, to rise no more. Such is the prophecy concerning Tyre, comprehending both the city on the continent and that on the island ; and punctually fulfilled in regard to both. That on the continent was rased to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar ; and that on the island, by Alexander. The latter used all the stones, rubbish, and earth of the old city, in making a causeway to join the continent to the island ; by which means he became master of the city, and fulfilled that part of the prediction which says, that her very dust should be scraped together, and her stones, her timber, and her earth, laid in the midst of the waters. At present, and for ages back, this great city, once the emporium of the world, is literally what the Prophet repeatedly foretold,—a bare 'rock, a place to spread nets on.' 'I visited,' says Maundrell, 'the ruins of Tyre ; a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, and vaults, without so much as one entire house. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place by divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, that it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry nets on.' "

A.—I have noticed a very striking prophecy respecting the King of Egypt, in the thirty-second of Ezekiel.

B.—It affords another instance of the sublimity of inspiration. The fall of this mighty Sovereign is predicted under the appropriate figures of a lion, which infests the woods ; and a crocodile, an amphibious animal, found in the river of Egypt ; and a sea-monster, pursuing his prey in the still wider waters ; caught, slain, and left a prey to the fowls and beasts. The figure is then changed ; and Pharaoh's fall, and that of his nobles, is compared to the extinguishing of the greater and lesser lights of heaven, plunging the whole land in darkness. (Verses 7, 8.)

A.—“ And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark ; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.’

B.—This prophecy was fulfilled in the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, after he had taken Tyre ; and the prophetic ode, which commences at the seventeenth verse of this chapter, may be considered as a finished model in that species of writing which is appropriated to the exciting of terror ; and bears a strong resemblance to the passage from Isaiah, just pointed out, in which the King of Babylon is represented as going down into hades. This passage of Ezekiel is even more crowded with terrific circumstances. God is introduced, ordering a place in the lower regions for the King of Egypt and his host. The Prophet delivers his message, pronounces his fate, and bids those who buried the slain drag him and his multitudes to the subterraneous mansions. At the tumult and commotion which this mighty work occasions, the infernal shades are represented as roused from their couches to learn the cause. They see, and hail the King of Egypt, and again lie down in the slumbers of death. Pharaoh being now introduced into this immense subterranean cavern, the Prophet seems to lead him all round the sides of the pit ; shows him the gloomy mansions of former tyrants, lying with their weapons of war beside them, and their swords under their heads, as in bitter mockery of their former prowess ; pronounces the names of each, as he goes along,—Ashur, Elam, Meshech,

'Tubal, Edom, the Princes of the north, the pomp and pride of all past ages ; and concludes with showing Pharaoh the place destined for him in the midst of them, where he must henceforth lie down in humiliation and silence with all his multitude. You seem to follow the steps of the Prophet, and the disembodied Pharaoh, in breathless silence ; and shudder, whilst you pass by the couches of once-mighty Kings, who, with their immense armies and innumerable subjects, all lie gathered into these vast regions of silence and death ; but with "their iniquity upon their bones," till the trump of God shall call them to judgment.

A.—I hope I shall now read this part of the sacred writings with more attention than before.

B.—Innumerable instances might be given of the pathos, the beauty, the vigorous delineation, and the sublimity of the poetic parts of Scripture ; but the subject is large, and I must recommend you to read them yourself with a fixed design to enter into their meaning, and to mark the force and appropriateness of their figures, and of the imagery in which they clothe their vast conceptions ; using such helps as you can at any time meet with.

A.—May I ask what was the intent of the prophetic dispensation ; and for what practical ends, predictions of the lot of various nations were recorded ?

B.—Not, certainly, to gratify that curiosity of man which delights to look into future events ; but for the most important ends connected with the faith, obedience, and comfort of mankind.

A.—They are always referred to, I perceive, as one of the proofs of the divine authority of the doctrines of those who delivered them, and of the books they wrote.

B.—And do you not perceive the irrefragable force of this argument ?

A.—I suppose it lies in this, that none but God can foresee the future ; and, that as these predictions were uttered in indubitable prescience of future events, their authors must have been under the direct inspiration of God.

B.—But the argument may be more fully developed.

Certain knowledge of the future, we are sure, is not possessed by man. The only thing that approaches to it is a probable inference how men will act, or how known circumstances may in certain cases, affect their feelings and volitions ; which inferences are drawn chiefly from past experience and observation. These conjectures, however, go but a little way ; and the event, from the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, often refutes the calculations of the wisest and most observant mortals. But when events, many years or ages distant, are predicted, depending upon causes not so much as existing when the prophecy was uttered, and upon a great variety of circumstances, and a long arbitrary series of things, and the fluctuating uncertainties of human volitions ; and especially when they depend not at all upon man as their contriver, but arise wholly out of the counsels and appointment of God himself ; it is then most manifest, not only that they proceed from an intelligence superior to that of man, but from that Being who alone is clothed with the attribute of a perfect omniscience.

A.—Please to state some instances in illustration.

B.—The flood was predicted more than a hundred and twenty years before it came, and could not be the result of conjecture, since it depended wholly upon a miraculous interposition of God. The promise of Canaan to the seed of Abraham was given several centuries previous to its accomplishment ; and who but God could foresee that the numerous offspring of the then childless and aged Abraham, himself but a wandering shepherd, should possess it ? The capture of Jerusalem by the powerful Babylonians might be a matter of reasonable conjecture ; but who could foretel above two hundred years before, that the Medes, then a weak people, should conquer Babylon ? Or who could write in Isaiah's prophecies the very name of Cyrus, so long before he was born ; and foretel that this Cyrus should liberate the Jews from captivity, and command their temple to be built ; or indicate the manner in which Babylon should be taken, namely, by the diversion of the river Euphrates from its channel, and leaving open the gates leading from it through the neglect occasioned by a drunken festival, but He who

“calls things that are not as though they were ?” Who could foretel that the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs of the desert, should remain an unsubdued and a predatory people, as they are to this day ? or would have dared to say that the Jews, though dispersed throughout the known world, should remain a distinct people as we see them to this moment ; among nations, too, into whose common mass the most distinct tribes and nations have sunk, and are now undistinguished ?

A.—Is there not a curiously minute instance in the case of the Rechabites spoken of by Jeremiah, to whom it was promised, “ Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever ?”

B.—There is ; and the more minute the circumstances of a prophecy are, the stronger is its evidence. Here more than two thousand years ago, a single tribe, distinguished by drinking no wine, and by refusing to live in houses, receives a promise of being perpetuated as a distinct race, retaining the same habits as their fathers : And to this day they are found, few in number, it is true, but still existing ; called by the same name, and distinguished by the same peculiarities, as in the days of the Prophet. But, to go to larger events equally beyond the reach of human conjecture : Daniel prophesies of the rise and successive fall of four great monarchies. The Babylonian was to be displaced by the Medo-Persian, that by the Macedonian, and that by the Roman, which was ultimately to be divided into kingdoms, as we all see it at this day. Think, then, for a moment of the infinite number of events which went to produce these results, and of their contingency, the workings of ambition, the achieving of victories, the plottings of policy, the concurrence of favourable circumstances, often apparently accidental, and the struggles with adverse events, which this succession of nations to universal empire, three of whom were in their earliest infancy when the prediction was uttered, implied. Think of the knowledge which it supposes of the volitions of an almost infinite number of men, of the working of their passions, of the conflicting of their interests, of even the little and

apparently fortuitous events, by which their counsels were often swayed, their interests affected, and their battles lost or won ; and instead of resting in human foresight, you are irresistibly lost in the perfectness and comprehension of the fore-knowledge of God.

A.—Then, besides many others, there are the prophecies respecting Christ.

B.—Yes : Answering to that anticipation excited by prophecies commencing with Adam, and enlarged upon by all the Prophets in succession, and which no delay could extinguish, at last comes a Deliverer, a Restorer, a Redeemer ; nor is it pretended that any one who has yet appeared, except our Saviour, puts forth the least claim to be the person referred to in all these ancient and successive vaticinations. This itself is remarkable : But when you take also into account, that the time of his coming was fixed by Daniel ; that the place of his birth was named by Micah ; that his tribe and family were also pointed out ; and that the circumstances of his birth, humiliation, teaching, miracles, rejection, crucifixion, ascension, and future glory, are in prophecy given with the accuracy of history, so that the life, character, and work of Jesus of Nazareth have precisely answered to all these prophecies, and fulfilled them ;—no doubt can remain, but that those “ holy men of God ” who spake of him, were “ moved by the Holy Ghost.”

A.—This I feel to be indubitable ; but how has prophecy, as you have said, served to confirm the faith of men in the revelations of God in all ages ?

B.—We can at least trace this effect throughout the post-diluvian world. The accomplishment of the predictions of Noah as to the flood gave the stamp of divine authority to the doctrines which he, as “ a Preacher of righteousness,” taught ; and with this impress they were transmitted to his descendants. The fulfilment of the predictive promises, as to the possession of the land of Canaan by the Israelites, confirmed the Abrahamic and Mosaic doctrines as being from God ; the fulfilment of all the prophecies of the Hebrew Prophets respecting the captivity, the rebuilding of the temple,

the destruction of Tyre, the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, the subversion of Babylon, and then of the Medo-Persian empire, placed the seal of truth upon the mission of those Prophets, and authenticated their moral and religious doctrines among the Jews after the captivity. The coming of Christ, and the fulfilment of ancient prophecies in him, have added the most illustrious evidence to the divine authority of the Old Testament ; whilst the no less marked accomplishment of the predictions of our Lord himself, as to the destruction of Jerusalem, those of St. Paul respecting the great apostasy, and those of St. John in the Revelation, as far as they are not yet manifestly future in their application, have given equal authentication to the New Testament.

A.—And I perceive that this is a kind of evidence which has gathered force from age to age ; and that the fulfilment of what is still future will give still greater weight to the proof.

B.—Doubtless it will ; and when antichrist, both Papal and Mahometan, shall be destroyed ; when the Jews shall acknowledge Christ, and the Gospel be preached unto all nations, then shall “the mystery of God” be fulfilled ; and before this grand demonstration of the truth “of all that the Prophets have spoken,” we should say that all infidelity must at once be silenced, did we not know that this mental vice results not now from want of evidence, but from a worldly and corrupted heart. The effect, however, will be great and general, and ultimately universal ; “every mouth shall be stopped,” and unbelief will in lowly shame confess its guilt before God.

A.—This leading purpose of prophecy was, indeed, worthy of so extraordinary a dispensation ; but perhaps it might be designed to answer other purposes.

B.—Doubtless ; and those also very important. The successive prophecies respecting Messiah continually exhibited the glory of his person, work, and redemption, to the faith of ancient saints ; just as the developement of his great designs in the conversion of the world, displays new glories to our view, and excites a stronger faith, and a livelier hope. Besides, as both the ancient saints, and those who have believed in Christ

since his coming, have often seen truth in fearful contest with error, and the church environed with enemies, and those of the most formidable kind ; prophecy has in all ages been a source of comfort, by revealing the final issue of things. The general meaning of the unaccomplished predictions could not be mistaken even by the mass of unlearned believers ; and in all ages, and especially in times of discouragement, and persecution, and apostasy, it must have been a source of great comfort to them, as it is to us, to know how the grand contest between the powers of light and darkness will terminate ; that the cause of our glorious Redeemer shall finally triumph over every nation ; and that “he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.”

A.—Has it not been objected, that the prophecies are obscure ?

B.—They are obscure to those who are not attentive to prophetic figures and symbols, which we may call the language of prophecy ; and also to those who do not consider the times and circumstances in which they were written, and which give the key to their meaning. This, however, is the fault of the reader. There is also, no doubt, a designed obscurity in many of them, that their meaning might not be obvious, at least in all its parts, until after the accomplishment ; in order that the freedom of human actions should not be interfered with. Unfulfilled prophecies are, for this reason, often obscure to us in every thing beyond their general import ; but many ancient prophecies were of a very explicit kind, and had no obscurity of meaning ; and others are still difficult only as to the time and manner of their future accomplishment.

A.—I have heard of prophecies having a double sense. What may this mean ?

B.—The term is not a happy one ; but it marks that great peculiarity of Scripture prophecy by which it was often intentionally applied to two or more events, so as to have a lower application to one, and a higher to another ; a near and a distant fulfilment ; a temporal and a spiritual one. So the seventy-second Psalm is a prediction both of the glory of Solomon’s kingdom, and also of the higher glories of Messiah’s

reign. The prophecies respecting Babylon apply literally to that ancient empire, and mystically to antichrist ; the predictions of our Lord respecting the destruction of Jerusalem refer also to the end of the world ; and thus we find terms and phrases in such prophecies which are to be applied, some to the lower, some to the higher event contemplated ; and to distinguish these requires great sobriety of judgment. The restoration of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon was also typical of their spiritual restoration as a church in the latter days, and the prophecies in many parts appear to respect both. "There are," as Lord Bacon finely observes, "springing and germinant accomplishments throughout many ages, though the light and fulness of them refer to one age." This peculiarity in prophecy appears to have resulted from that system of types, of which we before spoke, by which certain events and things were made symbols of others to take place under the evangelical dispensation. It may also be of service to you to recollect, that the Prophets often use definite numbers, as three and seven, for an indefinite number ; that, as to time, a day is often used for a year ; that things future are often spoken of as past, to denote their certainty ; that when they speak of "the last," or "latter days," they always mean the days of Messiah ; that with them, north, south, east, and west, are generally to be understood with respect to Judea, or Jerusalem ; that by "the earth," they frequently mean the land of Judea, or the great continent of Asia and Africa, to which they had access by land ; and that by "the isles of the sea," they understood the places to which they sailed, as Europe and the islands and sea-coasts of the Mediterranean. The spirit of prophecy, however, no doubt, in many passages, comprehends more distant places, though geographically unknown to the Prophets themselves.

CONVERSATION XIV.

Book of Job—Psalms—Proverbs—Ecclesiastes—Canticles—The chronological Order of the prophetic Books, with brief Notices.

A.—I THANK you for the information afforded by the last Conversation ; and beg now to make some inquiries respecting several books of the Old Testament separately. Pray, who was the author of the Book of Job ?

B.—It has been by some ascribed to Moses ; by others a lower date has been assigned to it, but without evidence. The events and conversations it records manifestly took place in an age anterior to the time of Moses, although we should allow it to have been composed by him in Midian ; for the supposed allusions it contains to the subsequent history of the Israelites are very fanciful and unfounded. Its age may be fixed somewhere between the time of Abraham and Moses ; and there is no sound reason why we should seek any other author than Job himself, whose name it bears. It presents us with an important proof that, in the patriarchal ages, those in every place who retained the knowledge of the true God, held precisely the leading doctrines which are found in the Old Testament Scriptures ;—satanic agency ; the subjection of evil spirits to the power of God ; the unequal distributions of rewards and punishments in the present life, unless, as in the case of the Mosaic law, the contrary is secured by a special covenant ; the doctrine of piacular sacrifice ; the expectation of a Redeemer ; the resurrection of the body, and a future judgment. It is in particular an early illustration of the truth, that the sufferings of good men are permitted for their moral improvement, and that the providence of God is not only general, but special and particular. The land of Uz, in which Job dwelt, is Idumea in Arabia Petraea. The language of the book is pure Hebrew, which, for a long time,

was the common dialect of the Israelites, Idumeans, and Arabs. This makes it the more probable that Job was a descendant of Abraham. This poem you will find rich in beautiful and sublime passages, and it gives us a high idea of the intellectual refinement and taste of the pastoral tribes of the ancient world, whom the conceited philosophers of modern times delight to represent as but a remove from the state of savages. Writing was manifestly known in the time of Job, who mentions it; and for this reason those who will have this art to have been first taught by Moses, place the book itself, in order to serve their theory, later than Moses; but as the law appears to have been legible to Moses and to the people without a miracle, we must suppose them already to have been acquainted with the art of writing. This book was probably introduced among the Israelites by Moses as a sacred composition.

A.—Was David the author of the whole Book of Psalms?

B.—He wrote so many of them, that the whole collection bears his name. Seventy-one are ascribed to him; several to Moses; and the rest to different authors who lived at different times, as low as the captivity. Of these we have the names of Asaph, Heman, Ethan, Jeduthun and the three sons of Korah. The whole collection is referred to by our Lord as prophetic; and this determines its inspiration. This, too, was the uniform judgment of the Jewish Church. The Psalms were not written only for private use, although, in some instances, they were suggested by private feelings and circumstances; but were for the most part designed for the public worship of the tabernacle and temple, and were adapted, therefore, to be sung with the accompaniment of musical instruments. To the present day they retain their power; and can never lose it so long as the perfections of God, the glory of his works, and the conflicts of his church retain their interest in our minds; and so long as penitential sorrows are felt, and mercies, spiritual and temporal, affect us with gratitude, all the varied emotions which true, but often conflicting, piety excites in the heart, will in them find their most appropriate expression. “This little volume,” says Bishop Horne,

“ like the paradise of Eden, affords us in perfection, though in miniature, every thing that groweth elsewhere, every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food ; and, above all, what is there lost, but here restored,—‘ the tree of life in the midst of the garden.’ That which we read as a matter of speculation in the other scriptures, is reduced to practice when we read it in the Psalms : In those repentance and faith are described, in these they are acted ; by a perusal of the former we learn how others served God, by using the latter we serve him ourselves.”

A.—What is the meaning of the word *Selah*, which so often occurs in the Psalms ?

B.—It is generally taken to be a musical term, directing the performance when sung. An eminent Jewish critic, however, explains it to be both a musical note, and a note of emphasis. It is derived from a verb which signifies, “ he raised,” or “ elevated ;” and, in his judgment, denoted both the elevation of the voice in singing, and at the same time indicated remarkable sentiments, and directed to the raising of the heart, in the devout consideration of the subject last mentioned.

A.—The Book of Proverbs was written by Solomon.

B.—And stands as a noble monument of his inspired wisdom. It is a difficult matter to make a proverb, for it must be at once so just, useful, and so universally applicable, that all shall perceive and admit its force. The most profound knowledge of human nature and human things, therefore, was requisite to produce these little gems of opinion on various subjects. Like real gems, too, they are conveniently portable, and by all men are esteemed to be of a value which the smallness of their bulk does not diminish.

A.—I have seen a book entitled, “ A Collection of the Proverbs of all Nations.”

B.—But when you take away from it the proverbs of Solomon, and all modern imitations of them, you will find very few remaining, except those which are echoes of each other. The invention of a very few proverbs entitled a man in former times to the appellation of wise ; but Solomon wrote “ three

thousand proverbs," which possess, too, an astonishing variety, whilst not one of them is founded upon an unsound principle. Take the proverbs of other nations, and you will find great numbers founded upon selfishness, cunning, pride, injustice, and national contempt and animosities. The principles of the Proverbs of Solomon are piety, charity, justice, benevolence, and true prudence. This their universal purity proves their inspiration.

A.—You have said that you thought it improbable that the Book of Ecclesiastes was written at the close of the life of Solomon, because it bears no marks of personal contrition before God.

B.—It rather appears to be the production of a better period of his life, since its object is to show the vanity of earthly things ; to inculcate the fear of God, and the necessity of seeking true happiness in a future state. It refutes Epicurean and sceptical objections ; and its difficulty arises principally from the rapid succession in which these objections and their answers occur, without any mark to distinguish them but their own internal evidence. Solomon had gone too far into worldly pleasures and the excesses of oriental magnificence, when he left us his impressive sentiments on the vanity of external enjoyments. He wrote, probably, during one of those pauses in his downward career, which were produced by the reproofs of conscience ; and had he fully listened to them, they would have preserved him from that awful apostasy from God into which he subsequently fell.

A.—What is your opinion of the Song of Songs ?

B.—That it is an inspired book ; because it was placed in the sacred canon by Ezra, and was uniformly acknowledged so to be by the Jews. Its immediate occasion was the marriage of Solomon, not with an Egyptian Princess, as is sometimes said, but with a lady of his own country, of which there is internal evidence ; and under this was couched mystically the covenant relation of God and the Jewish Church, of which marriage is often made the emblem in other scriptures ; where, however, it is not extended so largely into allegory. The

style is pastoral, and more strongly oriental than that of any book of Scripture.

A.—Have we the books of the Prophets in the Old Testament in the chronological order in which they wrote?

B.—Not exactly so. The earliest is Jonah, the Prophet sent to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Then comes Amos, who lived between 810 and 785 B.C. Contemporary with him was Hosea, both of whom prophesied to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Isaiah's time comes down a little lower, to 698 B.C. He boldly reproves the sins of his nation ; calls to repentance ; comforts the pious by the most illustrious prophecies of Messiah, and the glories of the Christian church ; and utters several most explicit predictions respecting the destruction of Babylon, Tyre, the Philistines, and other nations, all of which were remarkably fulfilled, about two hundred years afterwards. Joel was contemporary with Isaiah. His style is highly wrought, and marked by elegance and perspicuity. He exhorts the people to repentance on account of a famine brought upon the land by the palmer-worm, &c. ; and, in an affectingly descriptive manner, denounces a plague of locusts which was to succeed if they remained impenitent. He couches, under the image of this plague, predictions of the wasting of the land by the invasion of the Babylonian armies ; and thus affords another instance of the double application of prophecy to two distinct events. In the close of the second chapter he has the celebrated prediction of the effusion of the Holy Spirit, quoted by St. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost ; after which follows a highly sublime prophecy of the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem, and the wonderful deliverance of the Christians, described as persons who “call upon the name of the Lord.” Micah lived in the same age, and invites the people, both of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, to repentance, in foresight of the judgments to be inflicted by the Assyrians upon the one, and by the Babylonians upon the other. In this book is contained the celebrated prophecy which marks Bethlehem as the birth-place of the future Messias. Nahum lived about 715 B.C., and predicts the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian

empire, with wonderful minuteness and power. He is distinguished for ardour and sublimity. Zephaniah a little preceded Jeremiah, and like him calls the people to repentance, and predicts the Babylonian captivity. The time of Jeremiah extends from 628 to 586 B.C. His book is a collection of important prophecies, delivered at different times, intermixed with historical narrative. Habakkuk was a contemporary of Jeremiah, and, though in a brief manner, dwells with great force on the same subjects,—the wickedness of the Jews, their captivity, the destruction of the Babylonish empire, and their deliverance. There is great grandeur in his imagery. The date of Daniel is from 606 to 534. He was one of the captives, but raised to high rank in Babylon, as his history records. The Persian Monarchs continued him in his honours. As a saint, a statesman, a patriot, a Prophet, a confessor, and, but for a miracle, a martyr, he is equally conspicuous. Besides his splendid prophecies respecting the great successive monarchies of the earth, he records that it was announced to him by the angel Gabriel, that the holy city should be rebuilt and peopled, and should continue for seventy prophetic weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, after which it should be destroyed for putting the Messiah to death.

A.—How does the accomplishment appear?

B.—The commencement of this period is fixed at the time when the order was issued for rebuilding the temple in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. Seven weeks, or forty-nine years, was the temple in building. (Dan. ix. 25.) Sixty weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years more, bring us to the public manifestation of Messiah at the beginning of the ministry of John Baptist; and one prophetic week, or seven years, will bring us to the time of our Saviour's death, or the thirty-third year of the Christian era; in all four hundred and ninety years, according to the prophecy.

A.—How explicit and convincing is this!

B.—Besides these predictions, Daniel foretels the rise and destruction of Antichrist; the latter state of the Roman monarchy; the invasions of the Saracens and Turks; and the final triumphs of Christianity. Ezekiel was also one of the

captives in Babylon, but carried away in one of the earlier deportations. Ezekiel's predictions support those which Jeremiah was still pronouncing in Judea. He denounces with unsparing words the sins of the people ; predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and the complete subjugation and captivity of all the people ; then speaks of the ruin impending over the Moabites, Edomites, Philistines, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt ; announces the restoration of the Jews ; and, under the mystical representation of the building of a most spacious temple, represents the enlargement and glory of the Christian church in the last days. Haggai lived after the return from the captivity, and reprobates the people for their delay in rebuilding the temple, and has some illustrious prophecies of Christ. Zechariah, a contemporary, urges the Jews to the same hallowed and patriotic work. He has also several predictions respecting the four monarchies, and the conquest of Syria, &c., by Alexander the Great ; and then rises, like several of his predecessors, into predictions, yet unaccomplished, respecting Christ's kingdom, and the conversion of the Jews. Malachi closes the train of the illustrious choir of those extraordinary men, the Hebrew Prophets, on whose writings history has ever been pouring its light, and will continue to comment, as the great course of events runs on, till "time itself shall be no longer." Malachi's date is from 436 to 420 B.C. He was commissioned to reprove the Priests and the people for their irreligiousness, more particularly after Nehemiah's second return ; to whose efforts in effecting his pious reforms, the inspired authority of Malachi was made subservient. As "all the Prophets give witness to Christ," so Malachi foretels his advent, and the mission of his harbinger, John. Thus in these brief notices you have placed before you the succession of the Prophets of Israel and Judah, whose predictions the Holy Spirit directed to be recorded, and preserved in the church. To peruse them with full satisfaction, you must have recourse to the best commentaries.

A.—Was there not something singular in the manner in which they often delivered their messages from God, or their "burdens," as I see they are sometimes called ?

B.—They often taught by expressive action To impress the people with their state of danger, and thus to awaken them to repentance, they walked about in sackcloth. Jeremiah made bonds and yokes, and put them on his neck, to intimate the absolute subjugation of the nations to Nebuchadnezzar ; and he took a potter's vessel, and broke it to pieces in the presence of the Princes of Jerusalem, to denote the complete destruction of that city. This mode of instruction by signs was familiar among eastern nations.

CONVERSATION XV.

The New Testament—Manuscripts—Various Readings—English Translation—Political Changes in Judea—Scenes of our Saviour's Ministry—Face of the Country—Our Lord's Miracles—John Baptist.

A.—IN reading the New Testament I will make memoranda of such questions as I wish to propose to you, in the hope that you will be kind enough to favour me with your answers.

B.—Most gladly ; only, as I stated before, you must be satisfied with brief replies, as I profess only to afford you some little assistance in reading and thinking for yourself, and to prepare you for consulting expositions.

A.—I subscribe to your condition with gratitude. My first question then is, Why are the writings of the first four authors in the New Testament called Gospels, and themselves Evangelists ?

B.—Because the word Gospel signifies “ good news,” and an Evangelist is a publisher of good news. Thus the term Gospel is often used to designate the whole Christian system ; and every Preacher of the Gospel is, in a large sense, an Evangelist. The four accounts of the life of Christ are, however, called Gospels by way of eminence, because “ the glad tidings ” of our salvation are founded upon his incarnation, doctrines, works, death, and resurrection, all which they record.

A.—Were there no other histories ever written of the life and actions of our Lord ?

B.—Yes, many ; as it is natural to suppose, from the eagerness with which the first Christians everywhere would inquire after such accounts. Some of these are still extant, mingled more or less with vague reports and fables ; but four only, two written by Apostles, Matthew and John, and two by companions of Apostles, Mark and Luke, were ever received

as of inspired authority by the church ; and these were quoted, and appealed to as such, in the earliest ages.

A.—Do the Evangelists copy from each other ?

B.—Certainly not ; for the Gospels bear all the marks of having been written without any concert. This is proved by the variations which appear when they narrate the same events, or give the same parables and discourses, which, when in substance the same, are varied as to circumstances, one omitting what the other inserts, and the contrary ; just as you might expect from four unconnected persons of integrity relating the same occurrence, each dwelling most forcibly on that which at the time was most noticed by him ; and stating that which he remembered best.

A.—Is it not easy to conceive that the Holy Spirit might have influenced one Evangelist to give the whole series of the actions and discourses of our Lord, in a full and complete manner ?

B.—No doubt ; but it is not for us to prescribe how God shall instruct us. Doubtless the best methods were chosen ; and we see especially the wisdom of God, in giving us the testimony of four separate and independent writers, whose very manner of giving the account proves that they did not act in concert, to impose a fabulous history upon mankind.

A.—I have often felt that the Gospels afford strong internal evidence of their authenticity, from the natural manner in which every thing is stated.

B.—This is a very convincing consideration. There is no art discoverable in the whole ; no attempt to exalt their Master by laudatory remarks ; no expressions of wonder to call the reader's attention to what is indeed wonderful in itself ; no extenuation of their own ignorance and faults, and those of their fellow-disciples ; no bitter censures of the persecutors of their Lord, or of their own. Perhaps the freedom of the Gospels from all these interlocutions not only gives greater credibility to them ; but proves, that as many of those effusions of feelings were such as the circumstances were calculated very naturally to call forth, and might have been properly enough indulged in, by merely human writers, their

absence is only to be accounted for from that control of inspiration under which they wrote. The whole is a narrative “of the things which Jesus said and did,” delivered in the simplest conceivable form.

A.—The publication of the Gospels so early appears, also, to have been wisely ordered.

B.—Manifestly so ; for although Christianity had been largely propagated and received by thousands and tens of thousands who had been witnesses of the facts they recorded, or had received them from the Apostles and first disciples, or before the Gospels were written, they were all published before those persons had passed away who might have contradicted them ; and they were received as authentic histories by multitudes who had the means of knowing the truth of their statements. St. Matthew’s Gospel was written first ; not later than A.D. 37 ; St. Mark’s Gospel about A.D. 60 ; St. Luke’s about the same time ; and St. John’s a little later. The three first dwell more at large on the discourses and actions of Christ in Galilee ; St. John, more particularly on those in Judea and Jerusalem. Two facts are always to be remembered, as connected with this subject: First, that Christianity had formed large and flourishing churches in Jerusalem and other places, on the ground of the very facts reported in the Gospels being true, (for they had too many witnesses to be contradicted,) before a single Gospel was written ; and, second, that they were all published before that generation had passed away, which had witnessed the things recorded.

A.—In what language were they written ?

B.—In Greek ; as being well known in Judea, Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, and even in Italy : So that in no language at that time so universal could they have been composed. But translations of them into the vernacular tongues of all these countries were rapidly made.

A.—Before printing was discovered, all books would of course be written : Are the original manuscripts of the Gospels in existence ?

B.—No ; but many hundred copies of them still exist ;

and also of translations which were made from still older copies of the originals, as high as the second century: And the agreement of the most ancient versions with the Greek manuscripts now in being, shows that the latter were faithfully transcribed from still older manuscripts, as those were from the originals themselves.

A.—But I have heard of a great number of “various readings;” that is, as I understand it, verbal and other differences between these manuscripts of the books of the New Testament, produced by the mistakes of transcribers, or from a difference in the copies. How does this circumstance affect the received text?

B.—The various readings do not in any degree affect the credit and integrity of the text; the general uniformity of which, in so many copies, scattered through almost all countries in the known world, and in so great a variety of languages, is truly astonishing; and demonstrates the veneration in which the Scriptures were held, and the great care which was taken in transcribing them. Of the hundred and fifty thousand various readings, which have been discovered by the care and diligence of those who have compared numerous manuscripts with one another, not a hundredth part make any perceptible, or, at least, any material, variation in the sense. The reason they are so numerous is, that every the minutest deviation has been noted; as, the insertion or omission of an article, the substitution of a word for its equivalent, the transposition of the place of a word, and even variations in orthography. Where the sense is at all affected by a different reading, it is generally of little importance which reading is adopted; as, to give one instance, whether we read, “Paul, the servant,” or “Paul, the prisoner, of Jesus Christ.” In the very few instances which affect any important doctrine, the doctrine does not rest alone upon them; but is found in many other passages about which there is no doubt.

A.—There are, I presume, various readings of other ancient books; as, of Homer, Terence, &c.

B.—Yes; and it is from the light afforded by this variety, that critics have been able to establish a purer text. Those

authors which were most read and copied have the greatest number of various readings : But the true texts of such books is, for this reason, the better ascertained ; whilst the text of all books of which but few manuscripts have been found, remains obscure and unsatisfactory in many places, for want of the means of more extensive comparison of one reading with another ; from which the true reading so often breaks forth with such irresistible evidence, as to be universally received by scholars. Apply this well-known and established literary fact to the Scriptures. No books were ever so early or so widely spread, or so often transcribed ; nor have the various readings of any ancient books been sought after with so much pains and scrupulosity. "The consequence is," says a critic, "that of no ancient books whatsoever do we possess a text so critically correct, so satisfactorily perfect, as that which exists in the best editions of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures."

A.—Is not our English translation greatly admired ?

B.—It is ; and justly so. No translation bears a higher character : And it is wonderful how little the language has changed, since this translation was executed by forty-seven learned men, in the reign of James I. ; or, indeed, since the time of Tyndal, whose translation was the first English one made from the Greek ; Wickliffe's being from the Latin Vulgate. A few words which occur in it are, however, antiquated ; as, "leasing," for lies ; "daysman," for umpire ; "carriage," for baggage ; "eschew," for avoid ; "wist," for know ; "all-to," for entirely : And a few terms were formerly used in a more extended sense than at present ; as, "lust," for desire of any kind ; "conversation," for the whole conduct.

A.—It was in the reign of Herod the Great that our Saviour was born ; but when he was put to death, Pilate, a Roman Governor, held Judea : What political changes took place, after Herod's death, in the Jewish state ?

B.—Herod reigned thirty-four years, and the national independence terminated with him ; according to the prophecy of Jacob, that, until Shiloh came, the sceptre should not entirely depart from Judah. For when Herod divided his

dominions among his three sons, he assigned Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, to Archelaus : But he was deposed by Augustus ; so that Judea became a Roman province before our Saviour entered upon his public ministry. Herod Antipas the Third, son of Herod the Great, received Galilee, with the title of Tetrarch. He married Herodias, the wife of another brother, Herod Philip, and was reproved for it by John the Baptist ; who was on that account put to death by this Prince, in the manner related in the Gospels. It was to this Herod that Pilate sent Jesus, conceiving him to be a Galilean, and therefore his subject. Pilate was the Roman Procurator of Judea, acting under the Proconsul of Syria. On a complaint made to the latter of his unjust government, he was ordered to Rome, and banished to Gaul ; where, it is said, he put himself to death. Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, was made King by the Emperor Claudius, and received a part of Judea ; but, dying at the end of seven years, Judea again became a Roman province, and so continued till the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

A.—Some information as to the places which formed the scene of our Saviour's ministry would be interesting.

B.—The Jordan is the only proper river in Palestine ; for the others are mere winter torrents. Having passed through the lake of Galilee, it loses itself in the Dead Sea, which covers the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This lake is sometimes called “the sea of Tiberias,” from a celebrated city in its vicinity. On its shores our Saviour chiefly resided during his ministry. It is sixteen miles long, and six broad. “ Its broad surface,” says Dr. Edward Daniel Clarke, “ covering the bottom of a profound valley, environed by lofty and precipitous eminences, added to the impression of a certain reverential awe under which every Christian approaches it, gives it a character of dignity unparalleled by any other scenery.” Bethany, the residence of Lazarus and his sisters, was two miles distant from Jerusalem ; Bethphage lay between the two ; the Mount of Olives, just outside of Jerusalem, across the brook Kedron ; Emmaus was distinguished for its hot springs ; Ephraim, to which our Lord retired after the

raising of Lazarus, was a considerable city, eight miles north of Jerusalem. Jericho was nineteen miles from Jerusalem; and as the road to it was lonely and rocky, it was infested by robbers, and was made the scene, therefore, of the parable of the good Samaritan. Bethlehem was six miles from Jerusalem. In the country of Samaria there was Sychem, called in derision, by the Jews, Sychar, which signifies drunkenness. It was about forty miles from Jerusalem, and was the chief city of the Samaritans, after the destruction of the city of Samaria by John Hyrcanus before mentioned. Cæsarea was built by Herod the Great, and was the general residence of the Roman Governors. It was thirty-five miles from Jerusalem. Cæsarea Philippi was in Upper Galilee. Lower Galilee was most honoured by our Saviour's presence; and so much did he reside there, that he was considered a Galilean. The population, according to Josephus, was very great, and its towns and cities numerous; so that he had greater opportunities of doing good, and was more out of the reach of the malignant Pharisees at Jerusalem. Nazareth, where he was brought up; Capernaum, which may be considered his home, for there he paid the tribute-money; and Bethsaida, were all in Lower Galilee. Capernaum was upon the lake or sea of Tiberias.

A.—What was the face of the country?

B.—Mountainous, with some considerable plains. The most remarkable plain was the great plain of Jezreel, or of Esdraelon, the Armageddon of the Apocalypse. "Here, in the middle of the land," says Dr. Clarke the traveller, "and in its most fertile part, the tribe of Issachar rejoiced in their tents. It has been the scene of many a memorable contest. Here Barak, descending from Mount Tabor, discomfited Sisera; here fell Josiah; and here, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the march of Bonaparte into Syria, warriors out of every nation have pitched their tents in this great plain, and have had their various banners wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon."

A.—Have not infidels occasionally questioned the alleged fertility of the Holy Land?

B.—And have forgotten that its destitution of inhabitants, and its barrenness, are both an eminent fulfilment of the prophecies ; for the land, as well as the people, was to be “smitten with a curse.” There are not, however, wanting indications of its ancient productiveness. “Under a wise and beneficent government,” says the intelligent traveller before quoted, “the produce of the Holy Land would exceed all calculation.”

A.—What do the Scriptures mean by “the former and the latter rain ?”

B.—In the climate of Judea rains seldom fall, except in autumn and spring. The former rain falls about November, when they sow ; the latter, in April, a little before harvest.

A.—Is not the country then injured by drought in summer ?

B.—The heat is great, but the night-dews are very copious, and refreshing to vegetation. To them there are frequent beautiful allusions in Scripture. The cold of winter is rather severe.

A.—Our Lord wrought a greater number of miracles than any of the Prophets.

B.—As accrediting a far superior mission, and higher personal claims. Have you observed that he wrought them in his own name, and often without any reference to a higher power than his own ; whilst the Prophets and the Apostles wrought them as instruments of another and a higher agency ?

A.—This I had not remarked : But what am I to learn from it ?

B.—That they were servants, he the Master ; that they were men, and he God. Have you also considered how miracles prove a divine mission ?

A.—I conclude that they do so by proving the presence of a divine Power, exerting itself in a manner superior to nature, or the power of man, and that in such a connexion with the ministry of his servants, as to be a manifest testimony from God himself to their mission, and the truth of their doctrine.

B.—You have answered correctly : And you can point out

the circumstances which prove the works of Christ to be real miracles ; that is, such as prove an immediate interposition of Omnipotence.

A.—The healing of the sick, the blind, the lame, by a word or touch, or, when distant, by an act of his will ; the calming of the sea ; the feeding of several thousand persons with a few loaves and fishes ; and the raising of the dead, are, doubtless, divine works. But have not miracles been urged in proof of other religions ?

B.—They have ; but such pretended miracles have wanted characters which marked those of our Lord.

A.—Please to be more particular.

B.—In our Lord's miracles you observe the following circumstances : They are such as cannot be resolved into trick, or even the influence of the imagination, which, on some diseases, has great power ;—they were wrought in the presence of multitudes ; they were continued throughout his public ministry of near four years ; they were generally wrought on the spur of the occasion, so that there was no opportunity for collusion ; they were done under the scrutinizing eye of envious but intelligent men, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who, nevertheless, never denied them, but invented the wicked hypothesis, that they were wrought by the agency of an evil spirit. Neither such miracles, nor miracles done in circumstances so favourable to ascertain the truth of the alleged facts, were ever wrought in favour of falsehood.

A.—How are we assured that they have been rightly reported to us ?

B.—They were never denied by the Jews, not from want of inclination certainly, but because the witnesses of them were too numerous. The Gospels too, as we have seen, were published whilst multitudes were living who could have denied the facts had they not been unquestionable. This was especially the case with the Gospel of St. Matthew, published for the use of the Jewish Churches in Judea, within a very few years of our Lord's death. But before that was written, Christianity had been believed by many thousands in Jerusalem, and throughout Judea ; and as the claims of that religion

to be of divine authority were founded wholly upon its facts, their belief was the acknowledgment of them, as having been witnessed by themselves, or as universally admitted in the country. The miracle of our Lord's own resurrection, indeed, confirmed them all, as that was confirmed by the gift of tongues at the day of Pentecost ; by the miraculous powers given to, and exercised by, the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel ; and by the moral efficiency of that Gospel, which proof remains in full force to this day. It has always professed to save, and it has always saved, them that believe.

A.—The miracles of Christ were, I think, all beneficent, wrought for the salvation, not for the punishment or destruction, of men.

B.—They were ; for “ he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.”

A.—They were also very varied.

B.—This is an interesting circumstance. Some had a peculiar majesty, as when he walked on the sea, silenced the winds, calmed the waves by his word, and raised the dead ; some had great tenderness, as when he fed the five thousand who had been remaining long with him listening to his sermons, lest they should “ faint by the way,” on their return home. To the blind, the lame, and to those labouring under the awful visitation of demoniacal possession, he was specially pitiful ; and the sorrows of parents on account of their children and of other near relatives, arising from the affliction or death of their friends, never failed to excite his sympathies. Into how many sorrowing families his healing hand conveyed joy and gladness, a future world must declare ; for numerous as are the miracles which our Lord wrought, it is plain from the Gospels themselves, that comparatively few are separately recorded.

A.—In what sense did John the Baptist “ prepare the way of Christ ?

B.—By his coming in the character of his forerunner, and thus fulfilling the prophecies ; but especially by his being a mighty, and, to a great extent, a successful, Preacher of repentance. Several of the Apostles appear to have been prepared

for the teaching of Christ by the ministry of the Baptist ; and many who afterward received the Gospel from the Apostles had also been prepared for it by the convincing and humbling preaching of John and his disciples. "All the people believed that John was a Prophet ;" and this acknowledged Prophet declared that Jesus was the Christ.

A.—We are also perhaps taught by the sending forth of John to precede Jesus, as a Preacher of repentance, that repentance, in all ages, is necessary to prepare the mind for a cordial embracing of Christ as our Saviour.

B.—This is an important truth. "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel," is the divine proclamation, and Christ "absolveth" those only who "truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel." Wherefore, as our excellent Liturgy exhorts, "let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit." Always remember, that there can be no true faith without true repentance ; but that it is faith which is the immediate instrumental cause of our salvation.

CONVERSATION XVI.

Parables—Character of our Lord's Discourses—His Temptation—Expulsion of the Traders from the Temple—The Sabbath—Synagogues—Apostles—Mary Magdalene—Demonical Possessions—Miscellaneous Illustrations.

A.—DID not our Lord teach principally by parables ?

B.—He used that mode of teaching frequently ; but probably not so often as those plainer didactic addresses of which we have specimens in the Sermon on the Mount, in his conversation with Nicodemus, and in the numerous discourses recorded by St. John. But whatever form of address he used, the character of our Lord's teaching was a beautiful and touching simplicity ; an unspeakable grace ; and pointed application without any apparent effort. It is wholly peculiar to himself, and in accordance with the calm majesty of a DIVINE Teacher.

A.—Was not the use of parables common among the Jews ?

B.—The parable was a favourite mode of teaching, and had several recommendations when skilfully managed. It engaged the attention by its narrative character ; it awakened curiosity to discover the hidden meaning ; truth came with greater power when it was enforced by the circumstances of a well-constructed parable ; the hearer, too, was often brought unawares to assent to a truth under this veiled form, which he would not have admitted if proposed to him nakedly ; and he was thus made frequently his own reprobate. We have a striking instance of this in the case of the parable of the Prophet Nathan spoken before David.

A.—Are there any remains of this kind of teaching in uninspired Jewish literature ?

B.—There are ; but though some of them have a good moral, and others are delicately sentimental, or somewhat dig-

nified, they bear no kind of comparison, as literary compositions, (to say nothing of their doctrinal inferiority,) to the nature, life, grace, and appropriateness of the parables of our Lord.

A.—In lately reading several of the parables, I have, indeed, felt their great beauty and force. A few are, however, somewhat obscure. What plant does our Lord refer to in the parable of the wheat and tares?

B.—A pernicious weed, (*lolium temulentum*,) one of the grasses, which can scarcely be distinguished from wheat in the earlier stages of its growth.

A.—In the beautiful and affecting parable of the prodigal, so encouraging to the most unworthy to return to their heavenly Father, whom does the eldest son represent?

B.—All those persons outwardly less sinful than others, who, presuming upon their superior virtue, cannot bear the doctrine which teaches that the vilest of men, if truly penitent, may find ready and gracious acceptance with God, through Christ, and be placed on an equal footing in the family of God with those whose external conduct has been more correct.

A.—Why does our Lord so frequently found parables upon the notion of a King, or a King's son, going into a far country, and leaving his servants in charge of his affairs?

B.—In that age of the Roman power, it was common with the Kings of Judea, Galilee, and all the neighbouring countries, or with their sons on their death, or in case of a disputed succession, to repair to Rome, and obtain the confirmation of their claims from the Emperor and Senate, as from a power which could not be resisted, and which haughtily set up or deposed Kings at pleasure.

A.—This explains the matter clearly; for Herod the Great made a journey to Augustus for this purpose; and we find his sons and others frequently at Rome, endeavouring to court the favour of that great empire.

B.—They went to “receive a kingdom and to return.”

A.—But why are there so many allusions to feasts and marriages in the night?

B.—Because the principal meal of the Jews was in the evening ; so that the light and joy within the house, in several of our Lord's parables, represent the felicities of heaven ; and the “darkness without,” or the “outer darkness,” the miseries of those expelled, or shut out, from it.

A.—Have all the parts of a parable a moral or spiritual meaning ?

B.—Not necessarily so ; for often it is clear that the comparison holds good in one or a few points only, and the rest are introduced to complete the story or narrative. Parables, therefore, must be interpreted with judgment and sobriety.

A.—But you mentioned the longer didactic discourses of our Lord.

B.—These are of the highest importance ; and, though not parables, have figurative passages of exquisite beauty and force.

A.—Please to direct me to a few examples ; for I delight to “sit at Jesus's feet, and to hear his words.”

B.—By doing so, you will, like Mary, choose “that good part which shall not be taken away from you.” Let us then briefly consider the Sermon on the Mount. Our Lord begins by pronouncing those “blessed” or happy, who are distinguished for spiritual affections and attainments ; “the poor in spirit,” those who “mourn” in penitential sorrow, “the meek,” “the merciful,” “the pure in heart,” &c. ; and thus he tacitly reproves that worldliness which was the besetting sin of the Jews, and the ultimate cause of their destruction. He then teaches his disciples the duty of public usefulness, and a holy zeal for the salvation of all mankind : “Ye are the salt of the earth ;” “ye are the light of the world ;” and so reproves that bigoted sectarian spirit of the Jews, which would exclude all but themselves from the benefits of Messiah's kingdom, and extends “the love of our neighbour” to the duty of seeking the spiritual good of the whole human race, thus inculcating the noblest form of a public spirit. He proceeds to restore that law to the lustre of its original purity, which the Pharisees, who professed most zeal for it, had obscured by their corrupt

sophistry ; and he so explains the commandments as to show that they respect not only outward actions, but the desires of the heart, in which they originate. Thus every secret thought is brought under the control of a law of perfect purity, which regards anger as murder, and lust as adultery. He then enjoins the utter renunciation of sin, at any cost, though it should be like that of plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand. He inculcates the love of our enemies, reproves ostentation in religion, and enforces purity of intention and humility ; invites those who had been taught to make a show of their prayers, to secret devotion in the closet, by the assurance, that their "Father, who sees in secret, would reward them openly." The tenderness of his expressions, when calling us to the use of private prayer, is, indeed, greatly affecting and encouraging. He to whom we pray, is our Father ; "he seeth in secret ;" that is, he condescendingly regards our free and confidential closet exercises, and "rewards openly ;" answers our prayers by preserving and blessing us in our intercourse with the world, and in the acts of our public life. Further: He enjoins heavenly-mindedness ; and applies the true remedy to worldly and anxious cares by teaching the doctrine of a particular providence. This he does with an exquisite and beautiful simplicity which has no parallel. The time was summer ; the country in which he was then teaching was distinguished for fertility ; and the flowers of the field unfolding their beauties under a summer sky, and the birds of the air, whose sprightly motions and songs showed that they felt no want, afforded appropriate illustrations of the care of God over his whole creation. "Behold the fowls of the air ; for they sow not, neither reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?" "And why take ye thought" anxiously "for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?" And the moral of the

argument is as important as its illustration is convincing : “ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Our Lord’s manner of enforcing a duty is always peculiarly brief, but pointed and irresistibly powerful : “ Judge not,” be not hasty to condemn : Why ? “ That ye be not judged ; for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again,”—a truth often seen even in this life ; but the terrors of a higher tribunal, where we shall ourselves need mercy, warn us to be candid and forgiving to others. Prayer is enjoined ; but how persuasive is the reason which our Lord offers to excite that entire trust in God with which it must be accompanied, in order to be acceptable ! “ What man of you, whom if his son ask bread, will give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ! ” Various warnings follow, and encouragements to different duties ; and the whole concludes with a striking comparison intended to show the blessedness of practical obedience to his doctrines, and the vain hopes of all who separate knowledge and practice. The man who hears and obeys the sayings of Christ, builds his house upon a rock, and descending rains, and rushing floods, and driving winds make no impression upon it, for it is founded upon a rock ; whilst the mere doctrinalist builds upon the sand, and in the time of God’s visitation, the trial which every man must undergo, his frail foundation sinks under him, and his hopes are frustrated, like the wreck of a house bowed down by the storm, and swept away by mighty inundations. Judea, it is to be noticed, was subject to very heavy rains, and among its hills the floods were violent. We may say of this whole discourse, that it gives such a picture of personal virtue, as was never before conceived or expressed ; nor is it a mere ideal conception of an unattainable holiness. This great Teacher of whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report, died to obtain for us that grace, by which all this might be realized in the state of our hearts and the conduct of our lives. If you analyze the

other discourses of our Lord, you will have equal reason to be “astonished at his doctrine.”

A.—Has it not been said, that there exists a discrepancy between the teaching of Christ and of his Apostles in this,—that he speaks more of moral duties, and they of doctrine?

B.—This has been said by Socinians chiefly; who, as they reject the atonement itself, and faith in it as the means of our acceptance with God, and speak largely of human virtue as that which recommends man to the exercise of the divine mercy, very ignorantly or perversely set up one part of Christianity against another.

A.—Certainly, little as I know or ought to depend upon my own opinion, it appears to me that there is no doctrine of the Apostles which is not in the discourses of Christ; and that no virtues are enjoined by him, to which they do not give equal prominence in the practical part of their Epistles.

B.—Your observation might be abundantly verified by a comparison of passages; and all the real difference which does exist accords perfectly with the different circumstances in which each was placed.

A.—Be pleased to explain this.

B.—Before our Lord’s passion and ascension, the Christian system was not perfected, and therefore could not in all its particulars be fully announced. What, therefore, was peculiar to its complete manifestation, was reserved for the Apostles to place openly before the world; whilst in the sermons of Christ it is introduced incidentally and generally, or under the haze of mystical modes of expression, or in connexion with other circumstances, which awaken attention in his hearers, rather than satisfy it. Yet his uniform doctrine is, that he was to die for the salvation of men; that men were to be saved through faith in him; that the gift of the Holy Spirit in its fulness was to be the fruit of his death and intercession; and that the regeneration of man’s nature could be effected by this influence alone. These were the doctrines which the Apostles after his death (that is, after the great sacrifice had been offered; after the intercession of Christ in the holy place had commenced; and after the fulness of the Spirit had been

poured forth) more largely dwelt upon, or rather Christ himself taught them more largely by his Apostles ; for still it was Christ speaking to men by them.

A.—This many seem to overlook, though it exactly agrees with his own words : “ I have many things to say to you ; but you cannot bear them now.”

B.—As there was a fitness in the comparatively incidental and more obscure declaration of his sacrificial death, before it took place ; so, also, there was an equally manifest fitness, that, in his larger discourses, he should dwell upon the spirituality of the law, and the various branches of inward and outward holiness. The end of his coming was to establish the law, by honouring its justice in his own death, and by restoring its dominion over the regenerated hearts of his disciples by his Spirit. Its bright and perfect holiness was therefore to be set forth without a shade ; that men, convinced of their numerous and aggravated transgressions against it, might be brought to repentance, and, cut off from all other hope, might fly to his mercy ; and, also, that after their reconciliation to God through him, they might have before them the true standard of inward purity and outward righteousness, illustrated, moreover, and enforced by his own most perfect example.

A.—What is taught us by our Lord’s temptation in the wilderness ?

B.—That our Lord was to be “ tempted in all points like unto us, yet without sin ; ” and that we might look up to him for “ succour,” when we are tempted by the same evil spirit. From the circumstance that our Lord opposed to the different temptations of Satan quotations from the word of God, as admitting of no appeal, and no gainsaying ; we are also taught that the Scripture is our only rule of action, and that whatever would lead us to act contrary to that rule, is from Satan, and must be instantly resisted.

A.—Did not Satan know that our Lord was the Son of God, in the sense of his being divine ? and, if so, what hope could he have of succeeding in his attempt to induce him to sin ?

B.—Perhaps he had no hope of success, and his motive was merely to disturb and distress his pure and spotless spirit,

which he was permitted to do as a part of our Lord's humiliation. Or, though he knew well that the Son of God was divine, yet he might not know the mystery of the union of the human and divine natures, and might vainly hope to entice the mortal nature of our Lord, now weak and faint with long fasting, to some act, which, by infixing a stain upon it, might break that union, and frustrate the intent of the incarnation.

A.—When he promised our Lord the kingdoms of the earth, were they in his power to give ?

B.—Certainly not ; for, although he has great power in them, he has none over them. You are to remember that the devil's promises are always false ; for he is “ the father of lies.” He promises every seduced sinner pleasure, and he finds only misery and wretchedness.

A.—What meant our Lord by driving the traders from the temple ?

B.—These were persons who sold animals for sacrifices, and intruded into the court of the people, which was for the purpose of prayer only, where, also, they placed their tables for the exchanging of money. By this majestic act he showed that he was the Lord of the temple, fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi : “ And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.” He says, therefore, “ My house shall be called a house of prayer.” Thus he both proclaimed himself to be the Lord of the temple, and taught us to lay aside all worldly cares and thoughts when we come to his house to worship him.

A.—Our Lord wrought several cures on the Sabbath-day, to the great offence of the Pharisees : Did he then design to relax the strictness of the Mosaic law in that respect ?

B.—Not at all : For that law allowed of acts of necessity and mercy ; but he designed to rebuke the superstitious and hypocritical strictness of those pretenders to piety. The Sabbath, you recollect, is a part of the great moral law, written by the finger of God ; which law, our Lord declares, he came “ not to destroy, but to fulfil ;” that is, to establish : So that its obligation rests upon Christians, as well as upon the Jews.

The day was changed from the last to the first of the week, in honour of our Lord's resurrection, by the inspired authority of the Apostles, and was then called, "the Lord's day."

A.—I observe that the appellation "a ruler of the synagogue," occurs sometimes: What was his office?

B.—I have already mentioned the important institution of synagogues, which were places to which the Jews resorted for prayer, and to hear lessons read out of the law, and the other scriptures in order; which custom gave rise to the reading a first and second lesson among us. Each synagogue had rulers, whose business it was to appoint the reader, and to permit any fit persons to give an exhortation; upon which latter practice the sermons of the Christian church were grounded. Each synagogue was also a court for deciding on petty offences, and the rulers had the power of inflicting scourging. We see our Lord reading the lesson and exhorting in the synagogue of Nazareth.

A.—The synagogues, you have said, were numerous.

B.—These important institutions were established wherever the Jews were spread throughout the world; and, since their dispersion, have been the great means of preserving them as a distinct people. In Jerusalem, before its destruction, there were upwards of four hundred and fifty synagogues, many of them for the use of the Jews who came up from distant countries to the festivals, as the synagogues of the Alexandrians, Cyrenians, and others. The rule indeed was, that wherever ten Jews were found, there a synagogue ought to be formed; but not by a smaller number. The Rabbins therefore said, "The divine presence descends not but where ten are met together." Our Lord, on the contrary, taught, and perhaps with reference to this notion, that where but two or three Christians were found, they should meet together in his name, for acts of public worship; and declares, that he is in the midst of them.

A.—What were the times of the synagogue worship?

B.—The Sabbath, and the second and fifth days of the week; and, I may also remark, that the simple worship of the synagogue, consisting in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and

exhortation, was taken by the Apostles as the model of worship in Christian assemblies, and not the temple-service, which Popery afterwards imitated.

A.—The Pharisees appear to have been greatly offended at our Lord saying to the paralytic man, “ Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

B.—Because they acknowledged Jesus to be a man only, and rightly said, that none could forgive sins authoritatively, but the offended party, God himself. But, you observe, our Lord vindicates his power, that is, his right, to forgive sins ; and thereby declares himself to be God, which they thought to be blasphemy ; as it would have been, had he not been so in truth.

A.—In addition to the Pharisees and Sadducees, Scribes and Herodians are also mentioned in the Gospels : Were these distinct sects ?

B.—The Scribes and Lawyers appear not to have constituted a sect, properly so called ; but were a body of men who made the sacred books their peculiar study, so as to enable them to comment upon them, and instruct the people. They were chiefly of the tribe of Levi. The Herodians were a political party, favouring Herod the Great, who was obnoxious to the people generally ; and they were inclined to support also the sovereignty of the Romans, which the Pharisees detested.

. A.—Who were the publicans, so often mentioned in the Gospels ?

B.—Tax-collectors, or those who farmed the taxes and customs of a particular district, and let them out to the collectors. Some of these were respectable men ; but the body was in ill repute for extortion ; and publicans are therefore generally ranked with sinners. Matthew was sitting by the lake of Galilee, at the receipt of custom, that is, taking the duties on imported goods, when our Lord called him. He was, what we term, a custom-house officer.

A.—Why were twelve of the disciples called Apostles ?

B.—The word means a messenger. They were selected by Christ in a very solemn manner, after he had spent the

whole of the preceding night in solitude and prayer. The intent was, that they, being always with him, might be instructed in his doctrines; be the witnesses of his miracles, and especially of his resurrection; and then go forth to publish the Gospel to the world. After the destruction of the Jewish polity, the Jews submitted themselves to a spiritual head, called the Patriarch of Tiberias; and those beyond the Euphrates, to another spiritual Patriarch, called the Prince of the Captivity. These Patriarchs had legates called Apostles, who visited the synagogues in every place, and reported their state. This office is by some supposed to have existed before the fall of Jerusalem, where the centre of spiritual authority would be the Great Council or Sanhedrim. If so, our Lord took this office, as he did baptism, from the Jewish Church, and thus declared himself to be the spiritual Head and Fountain of ecclesiastical authority to his followers every where; and in this character sent forth his Apostles, not only to gather churches, but to visit and regulate them.

A.—Was Judas a good man when called?

B.—He was probably, like the rest of the Apostles, an honest inquirer after truth, and under good influence; but, being of a covetous disposition, and carrying the bag, containing alms for the poor, which our Lord and his Apostles distributed in their journeys, he began by pilfering that, and thus his easily besetting sin obtained the mastery, and so blinded his mind and hardened his heart that at last he sold his Master.

A.—A shocking instance this of the effect of covetousness!

B.—And of the obdurate and infatuating effect of all sin whatever, when indulged.

A.—Did not our Lord know that he would betray him?

B.—Yes; but his perfect foreknowledge does not prevent his dealing with us as free agents; nor has it any influence upon our conduct.

A.—How is this?

B.—Because the simple knowledge of my actions by another, whether this knowledge be foreknowledge or afterknowledge, is a thing manifestly independent of my own conduct.

The actions of another can be influenced only by persuasion or external force, neither of which was applied to control the conduct of this false Apostle.

A.—This appears plain ; and I now perceive how men may do that which is according to God's foreknowledge, and yet be free agents ; that is, as they act spontaneously from their own wills and passions, they are still accountable and punishable. Am I right ?

B.—You have taken the just view of the case ; for to foreknow is surely not to necessitate.

A.—Jesus commended the faith of a Centurion : He was, I presume, a Roman officer ?

B.—Having the command, as the name imports, of a hundred men. This good man, like some others of his countrymen, was a convert to the Jewish religion ; that is, a proselyte.

A.—In one of our Lord's tours in Galilee, I observe that he was accompanied by several female disciples.

B.—These had been cured of diseases, and of diabolical possessions. Several of them were women of property, and "ministered to him of their substance ;" thus he subsisted upon charity, and he who was rich, for our sakes became poor.

A.—Among these was Mary Magdalene : Is she not the same woman who anointed our Saviour's feet, and is called a sinner ?

B.—Of this there is no evidence. Mary Magdalene, or Mary of Magdala, the name of her city, was probably a very respectable woman, out of whom our Lord had cast seven devils ; but this was no stain upon her moral conduct. It is therefore from a baseless tradition that the Italian painters have painted exquisite pictures of penitent dishonoured women, and called them Magdalenes ; and somewhat of injury is done to her memory, by applying her name to this class of females. The conduct of our Lord to the woman who was a sinner, in the house of the scornful and self-righteous Pharisee, is, however, an affecting instance of our Lord's compassion and graciousness to penitents of every class. He had, it

seems, met with her previously, and had healed her broken spirit by an assurance of forgiveness ; and her washing his feet with tears, and anointing them with fragrant oil, was the expression of her grateful love. Washing feet with water, and anointing the head, were customary marks of civility to guests ; both of which Simon had omitted : But she washed his feet with her very tears, and anointed, not his head, but his feet, with the unguent. “ She loved much, for she had much forgiven,” is Christ’s defence of her conduct, and of his own in suffering her to approach him. He graciously accepts the offerings of love, even from the unworthy ; and lest her mind should be disturbed by the objections of the Pharisee, he repeats to her the assurance of forgiveness : “ And he saith unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.” “ Thy faith hath saved thee : Go in peace.”

A.—It is passing to a much less interesting topic ; but how am I to understand, in this account, the expression, “ She stood at his feet behind him weeping ?”

B.—The Jews did not sit at their meals, but reclined on couches on one elbow, with their feet behind them bare. John, the beloved disciple, lay in the Lord’s bosom ; that is, he had the distinction of reclining on the same couch at meals, and immediately next to his Lord.

A.—Do not some writers attempt to explain the demoniacal possessions by supposing them to be cases of lunacy, and of some other forms of disease, which, in popular opinion, were produced by the influence of Satan ?

B.—But they forget that the Evangelists in some passages distinguish these cases from lunacy and other diseases.

A.—And I think they must find it very difficult to explain why diseased men should ask our Lord whether he was come to torment them before their time ; or how diseases should leave the bodies of men, and enter into a herd of swine.

B.—Absurdities of some kind always follow from forcing violent interpretations upon the plain words of Scripture ; and in attempting to escape from one difficulty, we plunge into such as are far more formidable. Perhaps these actual posses-

sions were then specially permitted, partly for punishing a guilty people, partly that our Lord might visibly show himself to be that Seed of the woman who should “ bruise the serpent’s head.” We see his almighty power thus demonstrated ; and from Satan’s secret and invisible, but fatal, influence over the soul, we are thus encouraged to fly to him for succour and victory.

A.—But, now we are on this subject, allow me to ask, Was there not a violation of the private property of the Gadarenes, in destroying the herd of swine ?

B.—It was unlawful for the Jews to keep and eat these animals ; and our Lord acted as sovereign Lord in avenging his own law.

A.—He caused, also, the barren fig-tree to wither away.

B.—Yes ; but it was “ by the way side,” and not private property.

A.—What might the meaning of that act be ?

B.—The tree was an emblem of Jerusalem. He came to seek fruit where he might expect to find it ; “ for the time of figs was not yet ; ” that is, the time of gathering them had not arrived. So that, had it been a fruitful tree, figs would have been found upon it, as well as leaves. And he said, “ Let no fruit grow upon thee for ever,” that he might instruct the disciples in the approaching fate of that city ; which was arrayed with the leaves, the show of fruitful piety, but had become hopelessly barren, and was “ nigh unto cursing.”

A.—I was this morning much affected in reading that passage, “ But when Jesus saw the multitudes, he had compassion on them ; because they fainted, and were as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, and the labourers are few ; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he may send forth labourers into his harvest.”

B.—Nothing is calculated to convey a stronger impression of the wretched condition of men who have no sound religious instruction, than the image under which our Lord himself considered them, and commended them to our

sympathies : They are “as sheep having no shepherd.” Thus we ought especially to view the millions of the heathen world ; and not only pray that labourers may be sent forth, but exert ourselves to send them forth, when they are called by “the Lord of the harvest.” If the sympathy of our Lord at all influence our bosoms, we shall be most zealous and active agents in Missionary Societies, whose object is to provide shepherds for the wandering sheep, who may bring them into the pastures of the church, and the fold of Christ.

A.—The five thousand people whom our Lord miraculously fed in the desert had, it appears, followed him thither : Why did our Lord withdraw from the more populous parts ?

B.—Herod, having put John the Baptist to death, expressed a desire to see Jesus, perhaps to imprison him ; and our Lord therefore left Galilee, over which Herod ruled, and withdrew to a desert near Bethsaida, within the tetrarchy of Philip. That the people followed him, was a proof of their eagerness to hear his word ; his feeding them gave the testimony of a stupendous and most public miracle to his doctrine ; and the disciples’ being directed to make the people “sit down by companies” enabled them to ascertain their number with exactness.

A.—Is it not a singular circumstance, that He who could multiply a few loaves and fishes into so great an abundance, should have been so careful of the fragments, which he ordered his disciples to gather up ?

B.—It teaches us to waste nothing useful, and to unite liberality and frugality. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof ;” and yet he is careful of crumbs.

A.—When the Pharisees, after so many miracles performed by our Lord, ask of him “a sign from heaven,” what did they mean ?

B.—Some wonderful appearance in the heavens, or sound from the clouds ; as fire, thunder, or voices like those which issued from Sinai, or as in the case of the fire which fell at the prayer of Elijah. Our Lord, in reply, directs them to “the

signs of the times ; " by which he probably meant to turn their attention to the prophecy of Jacob before noticed : " The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Now he had come, that sceptre was rapidly departing ; for a part of the country was already a Roman province, and even Galilee and Decapolis were but nominally independent ; the Tetrarchs being mere vassals of the Roman empire.

CONVERSATION XVII.

Miscellaneous Illustrations of Texts—Transfiguration—Tribute-Money—The two Debtors—Feast of Tabernacles—Teaching by familiar Objects—Other Texts illustrated.

A.—OUR Lord says to Peter, “Thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Do not the Papists ground their notion of the supremacy of Peter, and of the Church of Rome, upon this passage?

B.—Very absurdly so; for there is no good evidence that St. Peter founded the first church at Rome; or, rather, the evidence lies against it. Then the rock could not mean Peter personally, who was in no higher sense a foundation than the rest of the Apostles; for the church is said to be “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.” In this sense, therefore, it has as many rocks, or foundations, as there were Apostles and Prophets. When one foundation is spoken of, that is always said to be Christ; and our Lord must therefore be supposed to refer to Peter’s doctrine, as contained in the confession he had just made: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;” which is, indeed, our only rock.

A.—And the prophecy contained in our Lord’s words has been eminently fulfilled; for the church continues to this day.

B.—Yes; and that in opposition to “the gates of hell,” all the forces which hell can pour forth from its gates; if the metaphor be considered as taken from a large city, sending out its armies from its gates, to invade and destroy. She has survived all persecutions, and the most formidable leagues of the Princes and Kings of the earth. If, by “the gates of hades,” we understand death, then the meaning is, that the church should be fed by living members from age to age; and so should continue to the end of time. Her Prophets,

Apostles, and most eminent Ministers, have all passed through “the gates of hades,” and no more fulfil their offices on earth ; but, though the Lord “buries his workmen, he carries on his work ;” and will do so to the end of time.

A.—What appear to be the ends designed by the transfiguration of our Lord ?

B.—Perhaps it was vouchsafed to afford support to his human nature, by the foretaste which he then had of that glory into which he was to ascend after his passion. It was designed, also, to confirm the faith of the three great Apostles, Peter, James, and John, who were permitted to be present at this wondrous scene. This miracle was truly “a sign from heaven,” such a one as the Pharisees and Sadducees asked ; but that which was properly denied to them who had hardened their hearts against the force of other evidence, was vouchsafed to the humble and teachable. So it is, that “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him ;” and that which he hides from the proudly wise, he reveals unto babes.

A.—But was it merely a confirmatory sign ?

B.—It was instructive also. It marked the superiority of Christ “the Son,” to Moses “the servant.” The face of Moses shone, when he beheld the same excellent glory ; our Lord was immersed in it, and was arrayed with it. It shows, also, the subservience of the law to the Gospel. Moses and Elias appeared in this scene as doing honour to our Lord ; and they entered with deep interest into the great subject of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem ; that sacrificial death to which their faith had always looked forward. As this was not a vision, but a real transaction, it pointed out, too, the glory of which even the body is capable, when it shall be raised from the dead ; and it proved the conscious existence of spirits in a separate state of being. Moses was a disembodied spirit ; Elijah a spirit inhabiting a body which had been taken up to heaven without seeing death.

A.—On the subject of the tribute-money, the Evangelist relates the following discourse : “What thinkest thou, Simon ? of whom do the Kings of the earth take tribute ? of their own children, or of strangers ? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers.

Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." I wish to see the force of his argument.

B.—The tribute mentioned here was a yearly offering for the service of the temple, which every Jew, even in foreign countries, was required to pay. It was, therefore, a tribute paid to God, as being for the service of his temple ; and when our Lord declares that the children of Kings were exempt from tribute, he intimates, that he was, by his natural relation to God as his own Son, free from the temple-tribute. But, to avoid offence, he paid it by miracle, not having so much as even a stater, which was the coin found in the fish's mouth.

A.—What was the amount of the tribute-money ?

B.—Half a shekel, equivalent to two Greek drachmæ, or two Roman denarii, or fifteen pence of our money. The stater was equal to four drachmæ, and was just sufficient, therefore, to pay both for Jesus and Peter ; who was as poor as his Master.

A.—Was the money created in the fish's mouth ?

B.—Curious questions we are not to ask. However it came there, this is plain, that nothing but omniscience could discern it in the depths of the sea, and nothing but the Power which worketh throughout all nature could bring that fish to Peter's hook. But have you noticed the interesting parable which speedily follows this relation ?

A.—Do you refer to the debtor, who, having been generously forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents by his lord, refuses to forgive a fellow-servant who owed him two hundred pence ?

B.—The same ; and I wish you to remember the two lessons which it teaches : That no offences of our fellow-creatures bear any comparison, as to number and magnitude, with our offences against God ; and that therefore we are bound to forgive them freely, as our Lord forgives us

A.—What was the value of ten thousand talents ?

B.—Near two millions sterling ; and the two hundred pence or denarii, each denarius being about sevenpence-halfpenny of our money, you may easily compute.

A.—What was “the feast of tabernacles,” which our Lord went up to Jerusalem to observe?

B.—It was instituted to commemorate the dwelling of the Israelites in tabernacles or tents, whilst they wandered in the wilderness. In our Lord’s discourse (John vii.) on that occasion, have you noticed that striking and interesting passage?—“In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.”

A.—Why do you refer to it?

B.—Because it affords an illustration of the manner of our Lord’s teaching, by turning surrounding objects, or passing events, into occasions of instructing his disciples in the most important truths. So the feeding of the people in the desert led him to discourse of himself as the bread of life; his asking drink of the Samaritan woman led him to speak of “living water;” and many of his parables were probably grounded upon some occurrences which had actually taken place, the leading circumstances of which were seized upon by him to convey the great and deep truths which he wished thus to fix in the memory, and plant in the hearts, of his followers.

A.—To what occurrence in the feast of tabernacles did our Lord refer in the passage you have quoted?

B.—To the drawing of water from the spring Siloam, which was done by the people on the last day of the feast. This spring issued from a rock near the temple; part of the water drawn on this occasion was drunk amidst joyful acclamations; and the rest was poured over the evening sacrifice, the people singing in the words of Isaiah, “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

A.—Did they not intend by this to commemorate the issuing of the water from the smitten rock in the wilderness, when the people were perishing for thirst?

B.—And “that Rock,” says St. Paul, “was Christ;” that is, a type of Christ. Our Lord therefore applies it to himself,

and cries, “ If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink ; ” and promises to put his Holy Spirit into the hearts of all that believe ; so that they shall have a constant spring of vital, heavenly, sanctifying influence in themselves, but from him. For this great blessing, without which your spirit must ever thirst and be unsatisfied, I entreat you to apply to him. Come, and he will thus richly and abundantly impart to you his Holy Spirit.

A.—This great promise is, indeed, most encouraging ; and I pray that I may have grace to come to him in the true thirst of desire, and with entire confidence in his truth and grace.

B.—I have mentioned our Lord’s custom of making use of familiar objects, occupations, and occurrences, in order to convey instruction : Do you see the advantages which were derived from this by his disciples afterwards ?

A.—This does not immediately suggest itself.

B.—Moral teachers among the wiser Heathen generally hid from the vulgar the little truth which they knew, by wrapping it in dark allegories, or in foreign fables, or in obscure philosophic discussion, or in languages or a style known and comprehensible only by the learned ; whilst our Lord not only used easy parables which were less the veil than the graceful dress of truth, and the plainest enunciations of his doctrine ; but he associated his heavenly wisdom with the scenes of nature, and with familiar occurrences, so as to make them standing instructers that might suggest to us the truths of which he made them the emblems, whenever we beheld them.

A.—I comprehend your meaning ; but please to proceed.

B.—His disciples, after he had left them, and his voice no longer fell upon their ears, surely, could not see the sun, without being reminded that Christ is the light of the world ; nor see a lamp placed upon its stand, without being warned not to hide their light under a measure ; nor notice a sower going forth to sow, without being warned how they both sowed and received the word of God ; nor observe weeds among the corn, but feel impressed with the separation of the

false disciple from the true at the end of the world ; nor consider the lilies of the field, without remembering the discourse of Christ on a particular providence ; nor mark the silent growth of small seeds into great trees, without being encouraged as to the prevalence and success of their divine religion ; nor look upon a vine and its branches, without feeling their dependence upon their Lord for life, and growth, and fruitfulness ; nor see an eastern shepherd leading his flock, without thinking of the good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep, leads them forth to pasture, knows them by name, makes himself known to them by his voice, gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, suffers them not to perish, but gives to them eternal life. And though to enter fully into the force and beauty of some of these images, we must recollect the climate and customs of the east, yet they are, for the most part, perfectly intelligible in all places ; and many others which are found in his discourses are quite as forcible in one country as another. Living water, or running streams, are everywhere emblems of the perennial supply of the Spirit ; the bread that perisheth reminds us of that which endureth unto everlasting life ; the breaking of morning, of the dayspring from on high ; the interruption of labour by darkness, of the night in which no man can work ; the afflicted poor, of Lazarus ; pampered opulence, of him who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and from neglect of his salvation lifted up his eyes in hell ; and alarms of sudden death are felt to be the voice of Him who bade us watch, because he might come in such an hour as we should not think of. I might multiply the instances ; but nothing is more obvious than that all creation, and even the common events of life, have been made the echoes of his own eternal truth ; and rendered vocal for our instruction in spiritual things. All nature may be said to be sanctified to the disciple by the association of its most striking and most familiar objects with the words of Him who “spake as never man spake.”

A.—When our Lord said, “ Before Abraham was, I am,” why did the Jews take up stones to stone him ?

B.—Clearly, because, by asserting his pre-existence to Abraham, they understood him to assert his divinity.

A.—And our Lord, by not correcting this notion, confirmed it?

B.—Undoubtedly; as in every other instance in which they understood him to assert the same thing.

A.—Why does St. John call our Lord the Word, which title is not used by the other Evangelists?

B.—John lived and wrote later than the other Evangelists, when certain false Christian teachers, who had studied the Greek philosophy, applied to Christ the term Logos, or Word, which was found both in Plato, and Philo, a philosophizing Jew of Alexandria, and among the Gnostics; and used it to express some mystical notion of Christ's pre-existent nature, which, however, implied that he was inferior to the supreme God. Whether St. John was acquainted with the writings of Plato or Philo, may be doubted; but he knew that the term, "the Word," is an appellative of Messiah in the Old Testament; that it is there used in the sense of his absolute divinity; and he therefore transfers this Old Testament title into the New, and fixes its sense for ever beyond the reach of all cavil.

A.—How does this appear?

B.—He declares that the Word was "in the beginning;" that is, when time and creatures began to be; or, as St. Paul observes, "He is before all things," and, consequently, not a creature; that he was "with God," which marks distinction, and yet "God," which declares unity; words with which nothing harmonizes, but the orthodox doctrine of a distinction of co-equal Persons in the unity of the divine essence. The Word is, then, declared to have created all things; and thus, by creative acts, is his divinity as fully declared as that of the Father.

A.—When our Lord declares that unless a man hate his father, mother, &c., he cannot be his disciple, what does he mean?

B.—Simply that he is to love them less than his duty to God, and fidelity to Christ. It is a Hebraism, or a mode of speaking peculiar to the Hebrews.

A.—In the comparisons used by Christ, is it not remarkable that God should, in one parable, be likened to an unjust Judge, and our Lord himself to a thief coming in the night? I know that this is as it ought to be; but I ask for information.

B.—An ancient rhetorician observes, that “in comparisons it is not necessary that there should be a perfect resemblance in the objects, but only in those qualities for the sake of which they are compared.” When a poet likens a hero to a lion, he does not intend to intimate that he is brutal and savage; but the comparison is only between the courage of both. For the same reason our Lord is compared to a thief, merely because his coming will be unexpected by the unwatchful, and a sudden breaking in upon the spiritual slumbers of mankind. The unjust Judge and the Almighty are rather to be viewed in contrast to each other. Our Lord’s argument is this: If an unprincipled Judge can be overcome by the importunity of a poor widow, shall not God, who is essential goodness, redress the wrongs of his own peculiar people?

A.—What was the feast of dedication, at which our Lord was present at Jerusalem?

B.—This was not a feast of divine appointment; but was instituted by that pious patriot, Judas Maccabæus, in commemoration of the cleansing of the second temple and altar, after they had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes. (1 Mac. iv.) It commenced on the fifth of December, lasted eight days, and was also called the feast of lights, because the Jews illuminated their houses on the occasion. Thus our Lord did not refuse to sanction a religious service, although not expressly commanded, which originated in a thankful commemoration of a great national deliverance, and which was untainted by any superstition.

A.—Our Lord, on several occasions, showed great regard for young people, and for children.

B.—Which ought to encourage the young to come to him in prayer for his blessing. His taking up children, little children, in his arms, and blessing them, and declaring that “of such is the kingdom of God,” proves these important

points : First, that young children are capable of grace ; for the imposition of hands was used by the Jews in the invocation of the Holy Spirit : Second, that children may be the members of his church on earth . Third, that the salvation of children, dying before actual sin, is certain ; “ for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

A.—When our Lord, in going up for the last time to Jerusalem, speaks to the twelve Apostles of his death, why does he say that the Jews should deliver him up to the Gentiles ?

B.—The Gentiles were the Romans ; for the Jews had no longer the power of inflicting capital punishment.

A.—Our Lord appears to have entered in triumph into Jerusalem ; but he rode on an ass. Was not this unsuitable to the pomp which, on this occasion, he assumed ?

B.—Not at all ; for horses had been forbidden to the Judges and Kings of Israel, lest they should confide in cavalry, which, in those days, was a very formidable arm of war, more than in God. Hence, Judges and Kings rode on asses, which are finer animals in Palestine than with us, and excited no idea of meanness and contempt.

A.—When our Lord came near the city on this occasion, he wept over it.

B.—This showed his benevolence ; for he had been treated with great indignity and ingratitude by its wretched inhabitants, and had seldom entered it but at the hazard of his life. Yet the tears of our Lord produced as little effect upon an obdurate people as his discourses ; and his prediction on this occasion, that the days should come, in which “ thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation,” was literally fulfilled.

A.—How does this appear ?

B.—The Roman Commander, Titus, afterwards Emperor, to cut off all hope of safety, encompassed the city with a trench and mound ; though this was a most laborious undertaking, for it measured nearly five miles. The very founda-

tions of the temple were afterwards ploughed up, and, literally not one stone was left upon another.

A.—Why was the man without the wedding-garment excluded from the feast?

B.—Because it was the custom to bestow robes on guests; and his appearing without one was both his own fault, and an insult upon the Sovereign. This parable indicates both the necessity of preparation for heaven, and that, if we are found without it, the guilt will be our own. This robe of a regenerate nature is prepared for you in the public royal wardrobe of our Lord, who gives to his guests, like the Sovereigns of antiquity, changes of garments, to fit them to appear in his immediate presence; but the application must be yours, and you will never be refused.

CONVERSATION XVIII.

Prophecies of our Lord, as to the Destruction of Jerusalem—Institution of the Lord's Supper—Baptism—Our Lord's Passion—Resurrection.

A.—IN the prophecies which our Lord delivers, as to the destruction of Jerusalem, what is meant by his words, “For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together ?”

B.—The carcase is the Jewish nation, and the eagles the Roman armies, who carried the image of this bird upon their standards.

A.—What is meant by “the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place ?”

B.—The same thing as the eagles, or Roman standards ; for these, being objects of worship to the Romans, were an abomination, that is, idolatrous ; and wherever the armies which bore them came, they truly inflicted desolation. Before this time it was customary for the Roman Governors to respect the scruples of the Jews ; and, when they came up to Jerusalem, to leave the eagles of their guard behind at Cæsarea.

A.—You have already said that these prophecies have a double reference, to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world.

B.—They have ; and no event could be more fit to represent the final doom of the wicked than this. The Christians, believing the words of Jesus, fly away in time ; and the terrible destruction of the unbelieving Jews, more severe than had been suffered by any nation, was a suitable representation of “the end of all those who believe not the Gospel.”

A.—The style of Christ seems unusually elevated in these discourses.

B.—It is : From the calm and tranquil manner in which he usually speaks, and from the allusions he is accustomed to

make to the soft and beautiful scenes of nature, and the pleasing events of domestic life, he rises into awful grandeur : "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven ;" the meaning of which symbols in prophetic language you already know. Distress of nations and perplexity come next ; the tumultuous agitation of populous regions are compared to the sea and its waves roaring ; whilst men's hearts fail them for fear, when looking forward to a succession of dire events, the issue of which should shake all the powers of heaven. And then, to complete this scene of terror, the sign of the Son of Man is seen in the heaven ; the Messiah they rejected and crucified bursts upon them in vengeful and overwhelming glory, and all the tribes of earth wail because of him. He sends forth his angels to gather together his elect, and pours out upon the rest the full-charged vials of his righteous judgment. There is, throughout the whole, as I have said, an ultimate respect to the judgment of the great day ; for this is one of those prophecies which have a two-fold application, one near, the other remote. And if you read the deeply-affecting account, given by Josephus, of the last war of the Jews with the Romans, you will see that the fanatical and infatuated resistance of the Jews, and the stern, exterminating ferocity of the exasperated Romans, united to bring down upon this wretched and devoted race a weight of calamities which have no parallel in history, and which could therefore only be fitly represented by symbolical scenery, taken from the final judgment itself. The whole account is too long to present you with even an abstract ; but as to the result, when the city was taken after a long and murderous siege, the Roman soldiers wearied themselves with the work of slaughter ; and when that ceased, all above seventeen years old were sent to Egypt, to work in mines, or were distributed among the provinces, to fight with wild beasts in the public shows. Twelve thousand died of hunger, and above a million of persons perished in the siege ; for the population of the surrounding districts, being assembled at the feast of unleavened bread, were shut in by the sudden commencement of the siege. Ninety-seven thou-

sand persons were taken prisoners, and were so barbarously treated as often to prefer death to life.

A.—Were the buildings preserved ?

B.—During the siege the temple was destroyed by fire, although Titus wished much to preserve it. The Roman eagles, the abomination just spoken of, were planted upon its smoking ruins ; and then, contrary to all apparent human motives, the Romans proceeded to complete the work of destruction after the capture of the city, so implacably, that of the streets, palaces, fortresses, and temple, not a vestige remained, except three towers, and a part of the western wall.

A.—I have read of the triumphal arch of Titus still standing at Rome : Was that erected to commemorate his victories over the Jews ?

B.—A most splendid triumph was exhibited at Rome by the emperor Vespasian and his son Titus. Among the spoils which were displayed in the procession, were the golden table, the candlestick of gold with seven branches, and the book of the law taken from the temple ; that book which, unknown to the Romans, contained predictions, written many centuries before, of all that had befallen the wretched people, whom, as unconscious instruments of the divine purposes, they had subdued and crushed as the grapes of the winepress. The arch of Titus was erected in memory of this triumph, and has bas-reliefs, still visible, of the golden table and candlestick, the censers, the silver trumpets, and a procession of captive Jews. Thus, Almighty God, in the preservation of the Works of Josephus, himself a Jew, and in these monuments, has been pleased to continue the proofs of the exact accomplishment of the predictions of Christ, and of the Prophets who preceded his advent. It is a curious fact, that no Jew at Rome has ever been known to go under the arch of Titus to this day ; although it stands across one of the public streets, the Jews go considerably round to avoid it. Thus tacitly do they acknowledge the truth of those historical facts which, by fulfilling the prophecies of our Lord, prove him, whom they still reject, to be the Christ.

A.—How long after the death of Christ was it before Jerusalem was taken?

B.—About forty years ; during which time, the Gospel was preached to them by the Apostles and others, and the offers of mercy from their Saviour were continued. These they contemptuously rejected, and so filled up the measure of their iniquities.

A.—What became of the Christians at Jerusalem during this siege ? for there was a large and flourishing Hebrew Church in that city.

B.—When the Roman armies approached, as they believed the words of Christ, they escaped, and withdrew to Pella and other places beyond Jordan.

A.—Our Lord was put to death at the feast of the passover : Was not this so overruled, that he might fulfil the great type of the paschal lamb ?

B.—Doubtless ; and immediately after the paschal supper, he took the bread, and divided it among his disciples, and commanded them all to drink of the cup ; and in this manner, he instituted the Lord's supper, which all his disciples were enjoined to celebrate, until he come the second time to judge the world.

A.—What is the import of this ordinance ?

B.—We commemorate the fact of Christ's sacrificial death ; and, by so doing, we declare and exert our faith in it when we approach the Lord's table with suitable dispositions.

A.—It is called sometimes the Eucharist ; sometimes, the Sacrament ; and sometimes, the Communion : What is the import of these terms ?

B.—It is called the Eucharist, from a Greek verb, which signifies "to give thanks," because it is a thankful remembrance of Christ's death. Sacrament signifies a holy ceremony, and was used also by the Romans for the military oath of fidelity. It was applied in the Latin Church to the Lord's supper probably for both these reasons, since this is a most sacred ceremony, in which we pledge ourselves to be the faithful followers of our Saviour. It is also called the Communion, because of the common participation of all true

believers in the benefits which it sets forth ; and because it is at once a pledge of our fellowship with each other, and of our fidelity to Christ. By the Greek fathers of the church, it is called a mystery, because it represented spiritual things in emblem or sign.

A.—This is also the case with baptism.

B.—Yes : There are two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper ; and their nature is well expressed in an ancient catechism : “ They are holy visible signs and seals ordained by God, that he may more fully declare and seal by them the promise of the Gospel unto us ; to wit, that not only to all believers in general, but unto each of them in particular, he freely giveth remission of sins and life eternal, upon the account of that only sacrifice of Christ which he accomplished upon the cross.”

A.—Do not the Papists ground their monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation upon the words of our Lord when he gave the bread, saying, “ This is my body ? ”

B.—Yes ; forgetting that when he took the cup, he said, “ This is my blood,” although they will not allow that the cup was his blood, but the wine contained in it ; yet if one be taken literally, so ought the other.

A.—Why, truly, it would seem as rational to say, that a door was Christ, or a vine Christ, because he says, “ I am the door,” and, “ I am the true vine.”

B.—That the disciples understood him figuratively, appears from their asking no explanation. And, indeed, they were accustomed to this elliptical manner of speaking in the celebration of the paschal supper, which was familiarly called the passover ; whereas it only represented or commemorated the passing over of the destroying angel. So also when the Jews take up the plate containing the bread, they say, “ This is the bread of poverty and affliction, which our fathers did eat in the land of Egypt,” meaning, This bread represents or commemorates the bread which our fathers did eat.

A.—What was the hymn which our Saviour and his disciples sang after the supper, and just before they went out to the Mount of Olives ?

B.—The concluding portion of the great thanksgiving used by the Jews on that occasion, which consists of the Psalms from the one hundred and thirteenth to the one hundred and eighteenth inclusive.

A.—Is the celebration of the Lord's supper obligatory upon all Christians?

B.—Not as merely professing to be Christians whilst living in the spirit of the world; for in that case they have no right to the Lord's table, but eat and drink "unworthily to their condemnation." But it is at once the duty and privilege of all true penitents and sincere believers. "Do this in remembrance of me," is our Lord's command, which cannot be violated with impunity. The ordinance itself is both a sign and a seal of the grace of the new covenant, which is offered to us, and confirmed to us, in every celebration; and when we communicate in faith, we become anew parties to this covenant, and its grace stands afresh confirmed to us.

A.—I suppose, that, after the Jewish Council, with the High Priest at its head, had found Jesus guilty of the capital offence of blasphemy, as they pretended, because he said that he was the Son of God, he was taken to Pilate, because without the Roman Governor they had no power to put any one to death?

B.—Just so; and Pilate manifestly endeavoured to save him, but was overruled by their clamour, and the fear of being represented to Cæsar as negligent in his office.

A.—Why did Pilate send him to Herod?

B.—Herod was at this time at Jerusalem keeping the pass-over; and Pilate, judging from common report that Christ was a Galilean, concluded that he was under Herod's jurisdiction. This prolonged the insults heaped upon our Saviour; but though "Herod and his men of war set him at nought," yet Herod found in him nothing "worthy of death," and thus joined his testimony to that of Pilate, as to our Lord's perfect innocence of any crime against society.

A.—Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment, I believe?

B.—And among the Romans it was only inflicted upon slaves, and those on whom it was intended to fix the greatest

possible ignominy ; never upon a Roman citizen. Thus our Lord stooped at once to the most lingering and painful, and to the most shameful, death ; and thus the cross of Christ became a stumbling-block. “The Pagans,” says Justin Martyr, “think that we are insane in giving divine honours to one who was crucified.” “The person you call Messiah,” says Trypho, an early Jewish writer against Christianity, “incurred the lowest infamy ; for he fell under the greatest curse of the law,—he was crucified ; for it is written, ‘Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.’” How little did these objectors understand, that thus “He was made a curse for us !”

A.—They crucified our Lord at “the third hour :” What time was that ?

B.—Nine in the morning ; the sixth hour, therefore, is twelve o’clock ; and from that to the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, there was a preternatural darkness. And now review the circumstances of that event which gives light to the world. How many subjects of meditation may it afford you ! The voluntary devotion of our Lord in giving his life for the life of the world ; the meek dignity with which he appeared before his unjust judges ; the resigned spirit in which he sustained shame and mocking ; the depth of his sufferings, both of mind and body, in the garden and on the cross ; the exercise of pardoning mercy to the penitent thief ; his care for his mother, who stood weeping before the cross ; the dignified dismissal of his own spirit after the last drop of agony had been drained from his cup of suffering ; the miracles which attested his high claims in the moment of his deepest humiliation ; the darkness ; the earthquake ; the rending of the veil, showing the opening of a new way to God ; the resurrection of the bodies of several saints, his death thus giving spiritual life to the believing malefactor, and bodily life to saints who had slept in the grave. The multitude were rightly affected by these prodigies ; they left the scene “smiting upon their breasts.” The chief Priests probably retired obdurate, and with gratified malignity ; but their triumph was of short duration, for, the day but one following, their guilty peace and

security was broken by the tidings of his resurrection from the dead.

A.—All these are indeed subjects of endless wonder. Never was there such a sufferer or such sufferings ! such humiliations and such triumphs !

B.—But let not the circumstances of Christ's death so occupy your attention, as to lead you from the great truths which it eternally teaches ; the infinite evil of sin, and the infinite love of God. By that blood only can your sins be washed away ; and by that faith only which follows a true repentance can you become interested in its merit. But the fountain is open for you and for all. “Arise, then, wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.”

A.—Our Lord rose again on the third day ; and, on any other occasion one might be amused at the tale invented by the Jews, that his disciples stole him away whilst the Roman guard slept.

B.—When men are resolved upon unbelief, they can yield themselves up to any delusions ; for the body of the Jewish people seem to have given up their judgment to this clumsy invention of their Priests, although the sepulchre was sealed by them, and, on their application, a guard of Roman soldiers was placed over it, to whom it would have been death to sleep on their watch.

A.—But the disciples saw their Lord, and conversed with him, and handled his body, and heard his discourses, and saw him ascend to heaven. They had therefore sufficient evidence of the fact ; and as for the world, to whom Christ did not appear after his resurrection, the gift of tongues, bestowed by an effusion of the Holy Spirit, was the public proof that “the Christ” had ascended to his glory.

B.—Your views are just ; and this shows the folly of infidels in carping at some trifling variations in the narrative of the resurrection by the four Evangelists. The great facts are, that the dead body of Christ was never forthcoming after the time assigned to his resurrection ; that the disciples professed to have seen him alive, and to have conversed with him at different times for forty days ; that they never swerved from

this testimony ; that they endured every kind of persecution for their testimony to a fact, which was of such a nature that they could not be deceived in it ; and that their excellency of character was a sufficient guarantee that they could not intentionally deceive. Besides, all worldly motives lay on the other side ; and nothing but a thorough conviction could uphold them in bearing tortures and death for “ the testimony of Jesus.” But the miraculous power which they exerted, and to which only can be attributed the mighty success of their preaching, as it was the means of producing the conviction that their religion was of God, was the proof both of the resurrection of Christ, and of his divine mission ; for they wrought these works in his name and by his power. Still stronger evidence, if we can conceive it possible, would not have convinced the obstinately worldly, because they were predisposed to reject a persecuted and self-denying religion ; but a weaker evidence could have convinced none. The most honest and sincere would, in proportion to their honesty and sincerity, require powerful proofs to induce them to venture their eternal interests upon a new religion, and to renounce that of their forefathers.

A.—The great argument for the truth of the resurrection is, I perceive, therefore very independent of the minor circumstances in the narrative of the Evangelists.

B.—And yet you will perceive that the whole account is given in so artless and natural a manner, as to carry conviction, by its internal evidence, of the perfect truth of the relation. How natural, for instance, was it that the pious and respectable women who followed him with so much affection, and whose courage led them to stand at his cross when the other disciples forsook him, should bring spices to apply to the body, according to the Jewish mode of honouring the dead ! How were the Roman sentinels to be driven away but by fears, excited by supernatural occurrences ?—and such were the earthquake and the appearance of the angels. The statement, that when the angel announced to the women that Christ had risen, and showed them the place where he lay, they departed with “ fear and great joy,” is itself almost a full warrant for the whole

account; so true to nature and to the circumstances of the case, is the mingled emotion ascribed to them. That John should outrun Peter, is well accounted for by the supposition, that, though the tide of Peter's affection to his Master had returned, the remembrance of his fall, not yet formally forgiven by his Lord, might check his speed; a feeling of shame and fear to be the first to meet him, very naturally intervening. The apparent difficulty that Mary Magdalene should, after the first annunciation of Christ's resurrection by the angel, return to the sepulchre and weep, as not knowing what was become of the body, could never have been put into a feigned narrative; but may be accounted for from that confusion of thought which strong feeling produces, and the effect of a lingering unbelief in the fact, notwithstanding the angelic attestation of it. Her recognition of our Lord, when he pronounced her name, "Mary," with his usual tenderness of accent, and her instant reply, "Rabboni," *Master*, with her attempt to touch him, are all inimitable touches in the picture, which nothing but the pencil of truth could produce. That two of the disciples should, after his death, return to Emmaus, the residence which they had left to follow Jesus, in the belief that he was the Messiah; feeling, according to their lingering Jewish notions, that their hope had been disappointed by his crucifixion; and yet, that they should be perplexed, as not knowing how to reconcile the evidences which he had given of his Messiahship with an event which seemed to refute them all, is so truly in character, that we at once feel its force, and enter into their feelings. The doubts of all the Apostles, ignorant as they still were of the true scriptural doctrine of Messiah's death and resurrection, notwithstanding it had been several times declared to them, are also very natural. They appear to have thought that the appearance was that of his spirit, not his body, until he obliged them to touch him and convince themselves; and when it is added, that at first "they believed not for joy, and wondered," if these contending and contrary feelings had not existed, they never could have been portrayed in language so peculiar.

A.—I have often felt the force of the appeal made by this affecting narrative.

B.—It is neither coldly and laboriously inventive, nor inflated ; the character, and, as painters say, the keeping, are perfect.

A.—Why did our Lord ask Peter three times whether he loved him ?

B.—To give him an opportunity of declaring that love as many times as he had denied him ; and thrice to re-instate him in his pastoral office, in order to secure for him the confidence of his brethren. Nothing could be more generous in manner, or divine in authority.

A.—What does St. John mean when he says, that if all the miracles which Jesus did were recorded, the world itself could not contain the books that should be written ?

B.—It is a strong Hebrew hyperbole ; importing that the works would be swelled to an inconvenient and troublesome number and size ; for it is plain that an immense number of miracles were wrought by Christ which are but mentioned in the mass by the Evangelists.

A.—When our Lord enjoins his disciples to go into all nations, and preach repentance and remission of sins in his name, he gives, I presume, an epitome of the whole Gospel.

B.—Truly so ; for the Gospel is intended to produce repentance, by discovering man's sinfulness and danger ; and remission of sins is obtained by faith in Christ, and is accompanied by regeneration, adoption into the family of God, heirship to the heavenly inheritance, and the earnest of that inheritance in the comforts which the Holy Ghost sheds upon the heart of every true believer.

A.—Our Lord enjoins baptism upon believing

B.—Yes ; as an outward confession of faith, and means of introduction into his church ; because he must be confessed before men.

A.—Does this exclude children ?

B.—Not if children of believing parents ; for as the Jews were allowed to place their children in God's church and covenant by circumcision, so, also, are Christians allowed to

do the same by baptism. For, that children are capable of being placed in a church-relation to Christ, is clear from his own words: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.” This ordinance binds parents to bring up their children in the knowledge of Christ; secures for them the grace of the new covenant; and lays all baptized children under an obligation to acknowledge and accept this covenant by their voluntary act in future years, and to give themselves up to the Lord.

A.—Is baptism most scripturally performed by immersion or by affusion?

B.—The mode is a very indifferent thing, because the essence of the rite consists in the application of water in “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” and because we have no express direction on the subject in the New Testament. But it is clear, from the numbers baptized by John the Baptist, and at the day of Pentecost, and from other circumstances, that immersion could not be practised. The primitive mode appears to have been pouring water upon the head of the baptized. Immersion was, no doubt, a subsequent, although an early, invention in the church, brought in under pretence of making the ordinance more strikingly symbolic.

CONVERSATION XIX.

Sketch of a Digest of the Narrative of the four Evangelists in the Order of Time.

A.—My questions have been exceedingly miscellaneous ; but the answers you have been pleased to give will, I hope, enable me the better to understand those important histories of our Lord's life which are contained in the four Evangelists. It, however, strikes me, that if I could see the principal events of that all-important story arranged in the order of time, I should derive much satisfaction from it.

B.—This has been done by many learned commentators, who have published what they term, harmonies of the Evangelists, in which the four accounts are digested into one consecutive history, and the discourses of Christ arranged, as nearly as can be ascertained, in the order of their delivery. All that I can do to assist you, until you consult a work of this kind for yourself, will be to present you with a mere outline of such an arrangement.

A.—That I am anxious to be favoured with ; and shall follow you with attention.

B.—Our Lord was baptized by John in the thirtieth year of his age. The events of his former life, which, for the most part, he chose to spend in obscurity, were few, but striking. At his circumcision, when eight days old, he received the name Jesus, according to the command of the angel, and for this joyful reason, because he should “ save his people from their sins.” He was then taken to Jerusalem to be presented in the temple of the Lord, as a first-born son, according to the law ; and his parents offered the sacrifice appointed for poor persons, “ a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons ;”—the rich offered a lamb. This was accompanied by the remarkable circumstance, that Simeon, an aged and devout man, who had the spirit of prophecy, and to whom it had been revealed,

“ that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ,” was led by the Spirit into the temple, whilst the child was presented to the Lord ; and he took him up in his arms, and blessed God, declaring, by the Holy Spirit, that he was the long-expected Christ. /

A.—What a moment for Simeon !

B.—And his words declare his emotion : “ Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” He was content to depart to his God, since he had beheld what Patriarchs and Prophets had been for ages expecting, but died without the sight. The aged Anna, also, a Prophetess, “ gave thanks unto God ; ” that is, poured out praises in sacred verse, under immediate inspiration, on this occasion ; and then spoke of him, announcing the joyful tidings to “ all that looked for redemption at Jerusalem.”

A.—Who were they ?

B.—Pious Jews, still found in a corrupt church, who were then eagerly expecting the fulfilment of God’s promises to his people. From the temple he was taken back to Bethlehem, where he was soon afterwards visited by the Magi.

A.—Were these Persians ? for among them wise men were called by that title.

B.—The Magi were not confined to Persia, but had spread into different countries of the east. They collected together in colleges, and studied natural, as well as moral, philosophy. Many of them had much juster notions of God than any of the ancient Heathens ; abhorring idols, and worshipping one God only. These were probably among the more devout and enlightened of this sect ; and as a general expectation was then spread through the world, that a great Deliverer was to appear, they would more eagerly than others desire that event. God was pleased to intimate to them our Lord’s advent, by a meteor, which they were divinely taught to regard as “ his star,” his celestial emblem ; and by it they were directed to the place where this personage, so gloriously symbolized by an extraordinary luminary, lay as an infant of days, in a very humble habitation. Yet so strong was their conviction of the reality of the divine intimations they had received, that they

worshipped him ; and presented their gifts, the value of which proved a providential supply to the holy family, to sustain them in Egypt, when obliged to fly from the jealous rage of Herod.

A.--Then the first express act of worship, paid to Christ, was by Gentiles.

B.—So it appears. But to proceed : On the return of the holy family, by divine direction they fixed their abode at Nazareth, in Galilee ; and we have no further account of our Saviour, until he attained the age of twelve years, except that he “grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom ; and the grace of God was upon him ;” short, but very emphatic, notices. At the age of twelve years, his parents took him to Jerusalem, to the feast of the passover ; where, having lingered behind them in the temple, he was found sitting in the midst of the Doctors, “hearing them, and asking them questions ;” while “all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.” This astonishing wisdom, however, you will observe, wore in him the robe of humility, so appropriate and beautiful in youth. He heard and he asked questions. Nor was his wisdom exhibited in formal discourses, unsuited to his years ; but, in his answers. The humility of Christ is a highly-instructive pattern, therefore, to the young ; and forcibly reproves juvenile obtrusiveness. The piety, as well as the humility, of his conduct, is also conspicuous. At twelve years of age, he was about his Father’s business. His filial obedience is also marked in these brief notices of our Saviour’s early life ; for it is said, “He went down with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.”

A.—A veil of entire obscurity is, I think, drawn over our Saviour’s life, until his baptism by John.

B.—This took place in his thirtieth year ; so that for eighteen years of his life we hear nothing of him.

A.—Is not this remarkable ?

B.—It is ; but there is, doubtless, as much wisdom in what God hides from us, as in what he reveals. A period of about six months elapsed from the baptism of Christ until he

attended the first passover at Jerusalem, in the full and open exercise of his office as a “Teacher sent from God.” This short period had its remarkable events. He received the testimony of the Father and the Spirit at his baptism. He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil forty days; thus passing through fiery trials, and conquering temptations directed against his personal piety, before he became a teacher of others. He was pointed out by John as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” He called Andrew and Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael, to be his disciples, who followed him as “the Christ, the Son of the living God;” and he changed the water into wine, at the marriage-feast at Cana in Galilee. These six months, with the exception of his momentary transportation to the pinnacle of the temple by the permitted agency of Satan, were spent chiefly on the banks of the Jordan.

A.—Do you date the period of the next twelve months of our Lord’s public ministry, from his going up to Jerusalem to the passover next ensuing?

B.—Just so; and his first acts there were, to expel the traders from the temple, as before noticed; to predict his death, (so constantly was this event before our Lord throughout life,) and to work several miracles; so that many believed on him. It was at this time that Nicodemus came to him by night, to inquire of his doctrine more particularly; and was favoured with that important discourse on the necessity of regeneration, the doctrine of salvation by faith in him, and God’s love to the world in the gift of his Son, which is recorded, John iii. 1—21. From Jerusalem Jesus and his disciples went into several parts of Judea, and baptized many that professed faith in him. John the Baptist having been imprisoned by Herod, our Lord went into Galilee; and as the road lay through the country of Samaria, he came to the city of Sychar, and there held the conversation with the Samaritan woman, at Jacob’s well, which issued in the conversion of many of the Samaritans;—an early proof that the Gospel was designed for the common benefit of all people. Proceeding to Galilee, he there exercised his ministry; and

at Nazareth preserved his life only by a miracle. He had discoursed with the people of that city in the synagogue, and they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth ; and yet, offended at a pointed reproof in the application of his discourse, they attempted to cast him down from a precipice ; but he passed through them and went away, and dwelt, that is, fixed his residence, at Capernaum. In a voyage on the sea of Galilee, in the vessel of Simon, such was the effect of the miraculous draught of fishes upon Simon Peter and Andrew, and their partners in the occupation of fishing, James and John, that they left their employment, and wholly followed him. During this year of his public ministry, Jesus “went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease among the people : And his fame went throughout all Syria ; and they brought unto him all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were possessed with devils, and those that were lunatic, and those that had the palsy ; and he healed them.” The impression made by our Lord’s works and discourses was, at this period, exceedingly great and extensive ; for the Evangelist adds : “And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond Jordan.” The calling of Matthew terminated the labours of this year ; after which he went up to Jerusalem, to the feast of the passover.

A.—What were the events of the second year of our Lord’s public ministry ?

B.—Whilst at Jerusalem he healed the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, for which the Jews sought to slay him, because he had wrought the cure on the Sabbath ; and when he defended himself by saying, “My Father worketh hitherto,” meaning even on the Sabbath, in sustaining his creatures by the constant operation of his providence, “and I work,” “they sought the more to kill him,” as well understanding that, by this argument, he claimed God in a peculiar sense to be his Father, and made himself equal with God. Our Lord defends his claim in a discourse of considerable

length and deep interest, recorded in John v. On the way from Jerusalem to Galilee, his disciples plucked ears of corn in passing through the fields on the Sabbath, being, as it appears, pressed by hunger ; for our Lord vindicates them on the ground of necessity. He on that occasion declared himself Lord of the Sabbath, and, therefore, the infallible judge of what was a violation of his own law ; to which law, indeed, his disciples were bound, but not to the superstitious interpretations of the Pharisees. In Galilee, also, he entered into a synagogue, and healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, to the great offence of the Pharisees, who took counsel with the Herodians to destroy him ; and our Lord therefore withdrew to the coast of the sea of Galilee, which you recollect is the same as the lake of Tiberias. Here great numbers followed him from Galilee and from Judea, and from the still more distant regions of Idumea, and the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing of the great things that he did. On this occasion an interesting circumstance is mentioned. All diseased persons, it would seem, who only touched him, were instantly healed ; which occasioned so great a press of the multitude upon him, that he was obliged to be provided with a boat, to stand off a little from land, and from this he spoke to the people. At this time, also, the unclean spirits "fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." Whilst he remained in Galilee he went into a mountain, and continued all night in prayer, preparatory to the important and solemn act of choosing his twelve Apostles. Being come down with them from the mountain, great multitudes again awaited him, from Judea, and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon ; some of whom came to hear him, others to be healed of diseases. The latter were in great numbers, for the Evangelist adds this very striking remark : " And the whole multitude sought to touch him ; for there went virtue out of him, and he healed them all." It was about this time also, from some mountain in Galilee, that celebrated discourse, called the Sermon on the Mount, to which I have directed your attention already, was delivered. This divine Sermon was

so highly valued by the primitive Christians that they made their children commit it to memory.

A.—Having finished this discourse, it appears that he returned to Capernaum.

B.—And there healed the servant of the centurion, who would not suffer him, from a sense of his own unworthiness, to come under his roof ; but had so great a faith, that he was persuaded that if Jesus spoke the word only, his servant would be healed.

A.—What did he mean by the reason he gives for not allowing our Lord to come under his roof ?—“ For I am a man set under authority ; ” that is, I suppose, holding his office by the authority of Cæsar ; “ having soldiers under me ; and I say to one, Go, and he goeth,” &c.

B.—By this he expressed his full belief that Jesus was commissioned by God, and could command diseases to go and come, with as absolute a power as he himself had over his soldiers, who were bound to yield him an implicit obedience ; so that he argued, that it was not necessary for him to come into the house, but only to command the disorder to depart.

A.—This was a beautiful thought, and strongly indicative of a lofty faith.

B.—And it was highly commended by our Lord. The next great miracle which is separately noticed, is the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, a town also in Galilee, which is related in a very touching manner, and was strongly illustrative, not only of the almighty power, but of the divine tenderness, of our blessed Saviour. (Luke vii. 11—17.) The answer to John’s disciples, sent by their master to Christ ; the reproof of Bethsaida and Chorazin for their unbelief ; and his entertainment at the house of Simon, the Pharisee, when the woman “ which was a sinner ” anointed his feet, an incident we before noticed ; appear to have followed next in order. After which, Jesus took a second circuit through Galilee, preaching and healing. In this circuit he was followed, not only by the twelve, but by Mary Magdalene ; Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod’s Steward ; Susanna, and many others, “ who ministered unto him of their substance.” On his

return to Capernaum he cast out a devil which had inflicted both blindness and dumbness upon the unhappy man who was the subject of this peculiarly afflictive, and, as it would appear, notorious, case of possession ; for it was the impression made by this miracle in favour of his Messiahship upon the minds of the people, which led the Pharisees to utter the blasphemy, “ This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” This was the wretched argument by which they steeled their perverted consciences against all conviction ; and which constituted that sin against the Holy Spirit, whose power co-operated with our Lord in working his miracles, which was declared to be beyond forgiveness.

A.—Then is this the only unpardonable sin ?

B.—It is ; and mark, it is not every sin even against the Holy Ghost which is unpardonable, although some make awful approaches to that which is so ; but the sin which is in truth the only one excepted from the exercise of the divine mercy, is defined to be that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost with which the Pharisees are here charged. Our Lord continued at Capernaum, delivering several discourses ; in one of which he reproves the Scribes and Pharisees for seeking a sign ; and in another he denounces upon them various woes, and unveils their hypocrisy. (Luke xi. 37, &c.) In another he warns an innumerable multitude of people against the leaven of the Pharisees, and calls them to a courageous profession of his name. (Luke xii.) At this time, also, he delivered several parables. We next find him sitting in a vessel, and teaching a great multitude, who stood on the shore of the sea of Galilee. Here he delivered his parables of the sower, of the wheat and tares, of the grain of mustard-seed, and the leaven hid in three measures of meal. In crossing the lake, he rebuked a tempest which had suddenly risen, so that his disciples “ feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him ?”

A.—To what part did he cross ?

B.—To the country of the Gadarenes, on the eastern side, on the borders of Decapolis, where he dispossessed a demoniac afflicted with a legion of evil spirits, who were suffered to

destroy the swine which the Gadarenes unlawfully kept. Returning back to Capernaum, Levi, which was another name of Matthew, entertained him, with a great company of publicans and sinners, to the offence of the Pharisees, to whom he declares, that he came “not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” From this entertainment he went out and brought to life the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue ; and on the way, a woman afflicted with an issue of blood twelve years touched his garment, and was healed. He heals two blind men, and casts out a dumb spirit ; and the Pharisees again blaspheme. After this our Lord visited Nazareth again, and was again rejected.

A.—What influenced them to this ?

B.—They knew the humble circumstances of his early life, and haughtily said, “Is not this the carpenter’s son ?” His next act was to send forth his twelve Apostles throughout the country, two and two ; “and they preached that men should repent ; and cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them every where.” In the mean time, Jesus himself went about preaching in the cities of Galilee, which were exceedingly numerous, and continued this service until the twelve returned to him at Capernaum with great joy, “and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.”

A.—Where was the desert place in which our Lord fed the five thousand ?

B.—On the other side of the lake to Capernaum, near Bethsaida, whither he had withdrawn to avoid Herod the Tetrarch. After this miracle he retired to a mountain, to avoid the people who wished to proclaim him King ; and his disciples left him alone to cross the lake to Capernaum. This was in the night ; and whilst they were in the midst of the sea, “tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary,” Jesus comes to them, walking on the sea, at first to their great terror ; “for they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit.” He then passed over with them into the land of Gennesaret, and healed great multitudes of people, who flocked to him from all quarters. Returning to Capernaum, he delivered those discourses

which are recorded in the sixth and seventh chapters of St. John's Gospel. Thus terminated the labours of the second year of our Lord's ministry.

A.—Did Jesus keep the third passover at Jerusalem ?

B.—No ; for it is said, “ After these things Jesus walked in Galilee ; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.” Remaining, therefore, still in Galilee, he held those discourses with the Pharisees and others, which are recorded, Mark vii. 1—17 ; Matthew xv. 12—16 ; Mark vii. 18—23 ; thence visiting the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he healed the daughter of a Syro-Phenician woman, though a Gentile ; and, passing through Decapolis on his way back to the sea of Galilee, he cures a deaf and dumb man, and feeds four thousand with seven loaves and a few small fishes. This multitude had followed him in his progress through the country of Decapolis. He then embarked on the lake, and sailed down to the coasts of Magdala and Dalmanutha ; which places you will see marked in the maps of Palestine. After this we find our Lord at Bethsaida, at the head of the lake or sea of Galilee, where he restored a blind man to sight.

A.—Where was Cæsarea Philippi ?

B.—At the head of the river Jordan ; and is to be distinguished from Cæsarea built by Herod the Great, and the seat of the Roman Governors. In the borders of Cæsarea Philippi it was that Peter, in the name of the rest of the Apostles made his celebrated confession, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ;” and received the promise, “ I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

A.—What may this mean ?

B.—It is partly explained, by Peter's being the first to open the Gospel dispensation in its perfected form, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles ; for he preached the first sermon to the Jews at the day of Pentecost ; and the first to the Gentiles when sent to Cornelius. More largely, it signifies power and government in the church, in which sense the same promise was made to all the Apostles collectively on another occasion, so that they had equal dignity and authority in all respects ; and the Popish notion of the supremacy of Peter is destroyed.

At this time, also, our Lord most plainly foretold his sufferings, death, and resurrection, which yet, by a strange perversion of their judgment by Jewish prejudices, the disciples could not receive, and perhaps hoped that he spake only in some allegorical or mystical manner of the oppositions which he was still to meet with from the Scribes and Pharisees before that glorious and irresistible manifestation of himself as Messiah, for which they looked. It was in these parts, also, that the transfiguration of Christ took place, in the presence of Peter, James, and John, apart from the rest.

A.—Why were only three of the Apostles chosen to behold this great sight?

B.—The reason is neither given nor apparent; only we see no particular distinction conferred upon Peter above James and John, a circumstance very unfriendly to the Papal notion of his supremacy over the rest. As, immediately before the transfiguration, our Lord plainly spoke of his sufferings, so he repeated this unpalatable doctrine with additional emphasis immediately after it, on their return to Capernaum: “Let these sayings sink deep into your ears; for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and he shall rise the third day.” But they “understood not this saying;” and, as expressive of the mixed and undefinable emotion which it produced in their minds, the Evangelist adds: “They feared to ask him of that saying.” At Capernaum, which was properly his home, he wrought the miracle to pay the tribute-money. Here, also, he taught humility to his disciples by the expressive and beautiful action of placing “a child in the midst of them;” and by delivering to them several important discourses and parables. (See Mark ix. 33—37; Matt. xviii. 10—35; Luke ix. 47—62.) At Capernaum seventy disciples were instructed and sent forth to precede him in every city and place which he intended to visit in his next tour; and when the year was about half expired, he went up to Jerusalem, to the feast of tabernacles, where by day he taught the assembled people in the temple, and at night went out to the Mount of Olives. At this time the woman taken in adultery was brought before him; he cured

also the man blind from his birth, who so boldly defended his restorer before the Jewish Council, and by his plain common sense and honesty, so greatly embarrassed them. (John ix.) He also delivered the discourses recorded John viii. 12, &c. ; and x. 1—21. On his way back into Galilee, the seventy disciples returned to him, transported with joy at the mighty miraculous powers which they had been enabled to exert, even over devils ; and Jesus having received the report of their mission, himself “ rejoiced in spirit,” and gave solemn thanks to his Father. Jesus now remained in Galilee, until the feast of dedication, delivering many discourses, and speaking several of his most finished and affecting parables ; as that of the good Samaritan, by which he taught that every man of every nation is our neighbour, and if in trouble must receive our good offices ; the parable of the great supper, in which he intimated the calling of the Gentiles ; those of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, and the prodigal son, by which he justified himself against the haughty charge of the self-righteous Pharisees, “ This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them ; ” the parable of the unjust steward, in which he reproves covetousness, and teaches the right and religious use of money ; and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in which he warns the proud and luxurious Pharisees of their danger of eternal ruin. On his way up to Jerusalem, in passing through the country of Samaria, which lay between Galilee and Judea, the inhabitants of a Samaritan village would not receive him, at which James and John were so offended, that they wished to call down fire from heaven to consume them.

A.—And I remember the meek and reproving reply of Jesus : “ Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of ; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

B.—A sufficient answer to all the pretences for persecution, and a warning against a heated and revengeful spirit, even where we conceive the honour of our Master affronted. True zeal is the “ pure flame of love.”

A.—And, as a comment upon his own words, I see that our Lord immediately entered another village, and healed ten

lepers ; one of whom, and the only grateful one too, was a Samaritan.

B.—Being still on his journey towards Jerusalem, Jesus instructs his disciples by the parable of the unjust judge, and that of the Pharisee and Publican. He then arrives at Bethany, and takes up his abode in the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, a pious family “ which Jesus loved.” From thence he proceeds to Jerusalem to keep the feast of dedication, before explained. Here, walking in Solomon’s porch, he delivered another of those discourses to the Jews, which, by asserting his divinity, led them, as they had done twice before, to take up stones to stone him. (John x. 22—39.)

A.—Rightly interpreting his meaning, when he said, “ I and my Father are one.”

B.—And also, “ The Father is in me, and I in him ; words which the Jews correctly thought to imply the essential unity of the Father and the Son.

A.—Where did our Lord go after this feast ?

B.—To Bethabara, near the Dead Sea, on the banks of the Jordan, where John at first baptized. Here the tidings of the sickness of Lazarus was first communicated to him, the affecting circumstances of whose recall to life are recorded John xi. 1—54, with inimitable pathos, and with a particularity and emphasis which shows how powerfully this great miracle confirmed the faith of his disciples, and confounded his enemies. This led the latter anew to take counsel to put him to death ; to avoid which, because his hour was not come, he retired to a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim. From thence he went again into Galilee, and after a short time returned to Judea, into the coasts beyond Jordan ; “ and great multitudes followed him, and, as he was wont, he taught them again, and he healed them there.”

A.—A short but vivid description of our Lord’s ministry in every place.

B.—And remember that teaching and healing are still united in his gracious, although invisible, ministry, the instruction and renewal of the soul.

A.—What particularly occurred whilst our Lord was in these parts?

B.—He discoursed with the Pharisees, who came to him, tempting him, on several points. Here, too, he laid his hands upon young children and blessed them ; put the rich young man to the test of leaving all to follow him ; and delivered the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. But now our Lord turns towards Jerusalem, for the last time, to accomplish the great purpose for which he came into the world,—“ to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ;” and the interest of the account given by the Evangelists deepens as we trace the events in succession. “ And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, and they were amazed” at his boldness in going up to meet certain death, well knowing the rage of the Jewish Council and the settled purpose they had formed to put him to death ; “ and they were afraid ” for their own safety. In passing through Jericho, which lay in the road, our Lord restored blind Bartimeus to sight ; “ and all the people, when they saw it, gave glory to God.” Still further on the journey, Jesus visited Zaccheus, a chief of the publicans, or tax collectors, and brought salvation to his house. When he was come nigh to Jerusalem he spake the solemn parable of the pounds ; and arrived at Bethany six days before the fourth passover from the commencement of his public ministry, and took up his residence with Lazarus, whom also the Jews sought to put to death, “ because that, by reason of him, many of the Jews believed on Jesus.” The next day he rode in triumph towards Jerusalem, amidst the acclamations of the people ; “ and when he was come nigh even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God for all the mighty works that they had seen, and cried, Hosannah, Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord ! ”

A.—Ah, how soon did this multitude of disciples leave him alone in the hands of his enemies !

B.—“ When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it ; ” and, weeping, predicted its entire overthrow.

Being come into Jerusalem, “the whole city was moved ;” and he having proceeded to the temple, “the blind and the lame came unto him in the temple, and he healed them.” On this day, certain Greeks, who had come up to the feast, desired to see him, and were introduced by Philip and Andrew. To these strangers, and to his disciples, he addressed these remarkable words : “The hour is come when the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

A.—What did he mean by this ?

B.—It is an obvious declaration of the absolute necessity of the death of Christ for the salvation of men. As no increase can arise from seed sown in the earth, unless its parts die, that is, dissolve and vegetate ; so no one could have been saved, had not Christ died to atone for sin. Necessary, however, as this was, and joyful as were our Lord’s anticipations of our rescue and salvation, the cup of which he had to drink was bitter, and nature shrunk from it. He therefore adds, “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour ! But for this cause came I to this hour : Father, glorify thy name.” Here was his submission ! And immediately there came an approving voice from heaven, the voice of the Father to whom the appeal was made, so loud that the people who stood by said “that it thundered ;” others, “an angel spake to him !” After continuing his discourses with the people throughout the day, at night he went out, “and lodged at Bethany.” On the following morning, on the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, he cursed the barren fig-tree ;—an emblematical act before explained. On his entering the temple, he a second time “cast out them that sold and bought there,” and taught the whole day in the temple ; the Chief Priests and Scribes still seeking to destroy him, whilst “the people were very attentive to hear him.” “And when even was come, he went out of the city.”

A.—It was on the next morning, I recollect, that going up to his daily labours in the instruction of the people in

Jerusalem, the disciples remarked that the fig-tree had withered away.

B.—And from that our Lord taught them the efficacy of believing prayer. (Mark v. 20—26.)

A.—What were the transactions of this day, which was the third before the last passover ; that which he celebrated on the night on which he was betrayed ?

B.—Exceedingly important ; and delivered by the Evangelists with great copiousness. He preached the Gospel to the people in the temple ; answered the question of the Elders, “ By what authority doest thou these things ? ” and reproved them by several parables ; among which was that of the vine-yard let out to husbandmen, and that of the man coming to the feast, not having a wedding-garment. On this day, likewise, the Herodians endeavoured to entrap him, by asking whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. The Sadducees, also, tried him on the subject of the resurrection, by the case of the woman who had had seven husbands ; and a Lawyer or Scribe, on the question of the greatest commandment. Having silenced all of them by the wisdom of his replies, he finally so confounds the Pharisees, by demanding of them how the Messias, as declared in the Psalms, could be both David’s “ Son ” and David’s “ Lord,” that they were afraid to ask him any more questions.

A.—How was it they could not answer that question ?

B.—Because they had renounced the ancient doctrine of their own Church, and of the Scriptures, that the Messiah was a divine Person ; and in no other respect could he be David’s Lord. As his enemies stand thus silenced before him, he reproves them, in a long discourse, with wonderful and piercing eloquence ; exposing all their hypocrisies before the people, and charging all their secret vices home upon their consciences. This address you will find in Matthew xxiii. Whilst sitting “ over against the treasury ” of the temple, he commends the widow who had cast in her two mites, not quite two-pence of our money, into the temple treasury. He then takes his final leave of the temple.

A.—As he was then leaving it for ever, did not the disci-

ples call his attention to the massive stones of which it was built ?

B.—And from this he predicts that, stupendous as they were for size, and for that reason much gloried in by the Jews, not one stone should be left upon another ; which prediction, we have already seen, was literally fulfilled. Having placed himself upon the Mount of Olives with his disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, and with the temple full in view, he utters those lofty and terrible predictions of the utter destruction of the Jewish state and city, to which I before called your attention. These were followed by the impressive and admonitory parables of the ten virgins, and of the talents ; and with that sublime description of the last judgment which you read in Matthew xxv.

A.—What were the events of the next day ?

B.—He spent it in retirement at Bethany ; and in the evening supped at the house of Simon the leper, with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. But Martha served, and " Mary took a pound of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus ;" for which she appears to have been rebuked by all the disciples, as having been guilty of an act of needless profusion, and especially by Judas ; but, in his case, from a principle of covetousness. She was, however, defended by our Lord. It was an act of love ; and he accepted it. " She hath done what she could," was his approving sentence ; to which he added these mystical words : " She is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burial ;" alluding to the Jewish custom of anointing the dead with costly perfumes. On this day Satan entered Judas, and he stole out from Bethany to Jerusalem, to make his infamous contract with the Chief Priests to deliver his Master into their hands. On the morning of the next day he sent Peter and John from Bethany to Jerusalem, to prepare a room in which he and his disciples might eat the passover.

A.—Was it not customary for the inhabitants of Jerusalem to provide rooms in which strangers might celebrate the passover ?

B.—It was ; and this was a room of this description. How

our Lord spent the day at Bethany, or what passed on the way to Jerusalem, we are not informed ; but “ when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve ;” Judas having returned to the company in the course of the day. With the paschal supper the events of the night before the crucifixion commence ; and they all demand your frequent and deep meditation. To settle a contention among his disciples, who should be greatest, our Lord takes a towel, girds himself, and washes the feet of the disciples ; thus teaching that “ the chief among them was to be as he that doth serve.” Then, being troubled in spirit at the treachery of Judas, which could not be hidden from him, “ he testified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray me.” To the inquiry which the other disciples urged John to make, who reclined next his Lord at the supper, Jesus privately answered, “ He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it ;” and having given it to Judas Iscariot, the latter, now more fully than before under the influence of Satan, went out to fulfil his purpose. Our Lord’s discourses were thus confined to the eleven,—weak disciples still, but at least sincere, and in heart faithful. He now gives them the new commandment, “ That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” Peter’s fall is then foretold ; the institution of the Lord’s supper follows ; and then our Saviour delivered that tender farewell discourse to the disciples, which is recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of St. John’s Gospel. This was closed by the intercessory prayer of our Lord, (John xvii.,) in which he at large offers up the most comprehensive and important petitions for them, and for all them who should believe on him through their word. This prayer was therefore offered for us.

A.—You have already said, that the hymn which Jesus sang with his disciples, was probably the Psalms cxiii.—cxviii., with which the Jews usually closed the paschal ceremony.

B.—This being sung, they went to the Mount of Olives, “ into a place called Gethsemane, where was a garden, into which he entered with his disciples,” and, leaving the remainder at some distance, he took with him Peter, James, and

John, " and began to be sorrowful and very heavy." This was the commencement of his agony. The garden was a favourite place of resort with our Lord, when he retired with his disciples from the city, and was chosen probably for its privacy. Judas, knowing this place of his retirement, led there the officers of the Chief Priests, who came upon him immediately upon his having rejoined the disciples after his agony. This was about midnight. Our Lord was led first to Annas, and by him sent bound to Caiaphas, the High Priest, who questioned him, it would appear, for a considerable time, of his disciples, and of his doctrine. John went with his Master into the palace of Caiaphas, but Peter waited in the vestibule, and there his forward and frail spirit sunk under the influence of fear, and he denied his Lord. As soon as it was day, the great Council of the Jews assembled, and, finding no evidence of any crime on which they might convict him, they declared him guilty of blasphemy on his own declaration, that he was the Son of God, and so pronounced him worthy of death. After various insults, they led him to Pilate's hall of judgment, because the power of inflicting death was now placed in the hands of the Roman Governor. Pilate, after putting many questions to our Lord, declared that he found no fault in him ; but supposing him to be a Galilean, sent him to Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, who was then at Jerusalem keeping the passover. Before Herod, too, the Chief Priests vehemently accused him ; but though Herod mocked him, he found no charge against him which could render him worthy of death.

A.—It is remarkable that our Lord was totally silent to the questions of Herod ; although he replied to some of those put to him by Pilate.

B.—The reason of this probably was, that Herod had no civil jurisdiction over him ; but Pilate was the Governor of Judea, in which country Jesus was born. Pilate endeavoured strenuously to release him ; but the clamour of the Jews prevailed, and he was led away to be crucified. When his sentence was passed, Judas, struck with horror at his crime, brought back the pieces of silver, the wages of his

iniquity, to the Chief Priests, declaring that he had betrayed innocent blood, and went out and hanged himself. At the third hour of the day, that is, nine o'clock in the morning, our blessed Lord was affixed to the cross. Until the sixth hour, or twelve o'clock, he was subject to the cruel mockings of the Priests and the people, and during that period gave pardon to the penitent thief, and committed his mother to the care of John. From noon till the ninth hour, or three o'clock, a miraculous darkness was over the land, and then our Lord “dismissed his spirit,” and by an act of his own, as the Lord of life and death, closed his voluntary sufferings. Immediately “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom ; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose ;” and the Roman officer who attended the execution, and his guard of soldiers, “when they saw the earthquake, and that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God ; and all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned.”

A.—Why were the legs of persons crucified broken before they were taken down from the cross ?

B.—To despatch them, and terminate their sufferings ; but our Lord was dead already, “so that they brake not his legs ;” and the Scripture was fulfilled, and he was thus proved to be the true paschal Lamb, not a bone of which was to be broken. (Num. ix. 12.)

A.—Doubtless it was by divine impulse that the soldier pierced his side !

B.—No doubt ; and thus was the new covenant ratified like the old, with water and blood, the emblems of the great twofold blessing included in the covenant grant, the remission of our sins, and the sanctification of our nature. In the evening, by permission of Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, with Nicodemus, having wound the body in linen clothes with spices, laid it in a new sepulchre ; and the next day,—that is, as we should say, the same evening, after six o'clock, for the Jews reckoned their day from the preceding evening,—the Pharisees,

by permission of Pilate, sealed the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, and placed over it a watch of Roman soldiers, to prevent the disciples from taking away the body.

A.—We have already conversed on the circumstances of our Lord's resurrection ; but I should be gratified to see the transactions of the forty days, from the day of the resurrection to our Lord's ascension, also, in their order.

B.—Besides the appearances of Christ on the morning of the resurrection, he showed himself in the evening to the two disciples at Emmaus, and later on the same evening also to the disciples, Thomas being absent. Between the first and the eighth day, he appeared again to the disciples, Thomas being present with them. This was at Jerusalem. Between the eighth and the fortieth day, the following appearances took place : He met the eleven Apostles in the mountain in Galilee, “where he had appointed them.” Again he showed himself to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias ; ate with them of the fish they had caught, and restored Peter to his apostleship. On another occasion, near the same place, he opened their understanding, that they might know the Scriptures which foretold his death, and its great design ; and gave them their grand commission, to go and teach all nations, with the promise that he would be with them “alway even to the end of the world.” On the fortieth day he ascended to heaven from Bethany, that is, from that portion of the Mount of Olives which was in the district of Bethany. Thus you have a sketch of the leading circumstances in the history of the Evangelists in order.

A.—I thank you for this consecutive view of these events, and the discourses of our Lord, the particulars of which I hope I shall be careful to study, as they are recorded in the New Testament.

B.—How powerful an appeal the simple majesty of the narrative of the life of Christ, as contained in the Gospel, will make to the heart and conscience of every man who attentively reads it, may appear from the following singular testimony of even the infidel Rousseau, found in his Works :—“In Christ we have an example of a quiet and peaceable spirit, of a

becoming modesty and sobriety ; just and honest, upright and sincere ; and, above all, of a most gracious and benevolent temper and behaviour : One who did no wrong, no injury to any man ; in whose mouth was no guile ; who went about doing good, not only by his preaching and ministry, but also in curing all manner of diseases among the people. His life was a beautiful picture of human nature, when in its native simplicity and purity ; and showed at once what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that Gospel which he preached to them. I confess that the majesty of the Scriptures, and the holiness of the Gospel, greatly affect me. View the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp ; how little do they appear placed beside this ! Is it possible that a book at once so sublime and simple, can be the work of men ? Is it possible that He whose history it records can be but a mere man ? Does he speak in the tone of an enthusiast, or of an ambitious sectary ? What mildness, what purity in his manners ! What persuasive grace in his instructions ! What elevation in his maxims ! What profound wisdom in his discourses ! What presence of mind, what ingenuity, and what justness in his answers ! What empire over his passions ! Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, to suffer, and to die, without weakness and without ostentation ? ”

A.—And this from an infidel ?

B.—Yes, under momentary conviction ; and if such be the views of Christ expressed by an enemy, what ought to be the sentiments of his friends !

CONVERSATION XX.

Acts of the Apostles—Day of Pentecost—Stephen—Gamaliel—Conversion of St. Paul—His Journeys, Labours, and Imprisonments.

A.—THE book entitled “The Acts of the Apostles” was, I find, written by St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul: Is it to be considered as a history of the church for the thirty years through which it extends?

B.—By no means: It is very scanty in its information as to the labours of any of the Apostles except those of St. Paul, and gives but a small portion even of his public life. Its main object was not to give historical information; for, although it contains much of that, and of the most interesting kind, this was subservient to other and still more important designs.

A.—What were they?

B.—It records the appointment of Matthias to the Apostleship, in the place of Judas; it relates with great minuteness of circumstance that important fact, the descent of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost, which so fully demonstrated, as we have said, the resurrection of our Lord. It narrates the bold preaching of the Apostles at Jerusalem in the very presence of those who had crucified Christ, and the miracles they wrought in his name before the people who had rejected him; so that we see that Christianity began to be published, and was received, in the very city where thousands were living who could have denied the facts upon which it was founded, had they not been unquestionable. It records the death of Stephen, the first martyr, under circumstances highly encouraging to all who had to suffer and die in the same blessed cause; for Christ is seen standing at the right hand of God to receive the spirit of his faithful confessor; the dissemination of the Gospel in all places into which the first Christians were driven by persecution, so that the storm only scattered more widely the vital seed of truth and salvation,

a circumstance recorded, probably, to support the church under the numerous persecutions to which it was to be subject, and from which the same effect has so often followed ; the opening of the gate of faith to the Gentiles, by the preaching of Peter to Cornelius on the express command of God, a circumstance necessary to overcome the Jewish prejudice against the Gentiles, and to show that no difference was put between them and the Hebrew believers, the same Spirit being visibly given to the believing Gentiles, as to the Apostles at first ; the conversion of St. Paul for the express purpose of making him in a special manner an Apostle to the Gentiles ; the success of his preaching, and that of Barnabas, among the Gentiles ; the important decree of the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, relieving the Gentile converts from the obligation of circumcision and Jewish rites ; and, finally, a brief history of the journeys and labours of St. Paul until his two years' imprisonment at Rome, an account of which forms so admirable and useful an introduction to his Epistles.

A.—What is the meaning of Pentecost ?

B.—It signifies “fiftieth” in Greek, and was the fiftieth day from the passover. It was the feast of first fruits ; the day on which the Jews offered to God the first fruits of their harvest ; and by the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled disciples it was made that glorious day on which the first fruits of Christianity, in the conversion of three thousand souls, were presented to the exalted Saviour, and added to the Lord.

A.—The gift of tongues appears to have been a most unequivocal miracle.

B.—Yes ; and it was so ordered as to occur at a time when Jews and proselytes from many distant countries were present at the feast, who might be judges of the languages spoken, and witnesses of the fact. “For what could be a greater proof of God speaking in them, and by them, than their being able to do that in an instant which the study of a whole life could hardly, if at all, qualify any man to do ?”*

A.—And as many of the three thousand converts were, doubtless, from those distant parts of the world, they would, on their return, carry Christianity into their respective countries.

B.—This shows the wisdom of God in ordering the times and the seasons of his own works.

A.—Why had the first Jewish Christians all things in common ?

B.—It was necessary for that time, when their poor would be refused charity by unbelievers, and when they scrupled to partake of the temple sacrifices, which were a great relief to the poor of Jerusalem. It appears to have been a temporary regulation, and confined to Jerusalem, as it is not enjoined upon any other Christian churches in the Epistles.

A.—Gamaliel, who advised the Jewish Council to let Peter and John alone when they were deliberating upon putting them to death, appears to have been a prudent man.

B.—And his counsel is of importance in the argument for the truth of the resurrection of Christ, and the miracles of the Apostles. He does not deny either ; but places the matter upon another issue : “ If this counsel or work be of men, it will come to nought ; but if of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God. And to him they agreed.” Now if the Council knew that the disciples had stolen away Christ’s body, as they had reported ; and that the lame man had not been healed by the Apostles, Gamaliel must have been laughed at by the whole Council for presuming it to be even possible that the work could be of God ; and yet to him they all agreed.

A.—I see the force of this. May I ask, Why did Stephen, in his oration, run over so many points of the Jewish history ?

B.—To show that he was not ignorant of the Scriptures, as perhaps the Chief Priests supposed ; and then to convince them, that they were the same stiff-necked and obdurate people as their fathers had been. We have probably but the heads of this powerful discourse ; and it is also an unfinished one, for they ran upon him and cast him out of the city, to stone him. He spake words which cut them to the heart, but

still in the spirit of love ; for he died like his Master, praying for his murderers.

A.—I have sometimes paused to contemplate this striking picture ;—the bitter Pharisees urging on the execution ; the witnesses, who by law were obliged to cast the first stone, laying down their clothes at the feet of a young man, who was afterwards to suffer stoning for the same hallowed cause ; the leader of the noble army of martyrs meekly kneeling down, and calling upon his Saviour ; and that Saviour fully disclosing himself to the eye of the sufferer, in the midst of the glory of God, and standing to receive his spirit.

B.—It is profitable often to pause and meditate upon the various circumstances introduced into the sacred narrative ; the force and instruction of which is lost by haste and slight attention.

A.—The conversion of Saul was quite out of the ordinary course.

B.—It was ; to show us that the Lord confines not himself to any one method of effecting the salvation of men. Here an extraordinary instrument was to be provided ; and the wasting of the church arrested by the conversion of its most zealous persecutor. This immediately followed ; for, upon Saul's embracing the faith and preaching it, so great was the effect upon his bigoted employers, that it is added, “ Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria.”

A.—St. Paul's conversion seems to afford a strong confirmation of the truth of Christianity.

B.—It is an irresistible demonstration. For, First, it took place but two years after our Lord's death ; so that Saul must have known whether the miracles of our Lord were denied on good evidence, or, being admitted, were attributed to diabolical agency : If the former, no fancied appearance to him on the way to Damascus could have induced him to believe a manifest imposture ; and if the latter, then something occurred to induce him to admit that they were done by the power of God. Secondly, his prejudices, his interests, his character among his countrymen, and the strength of his religious zeal, were all

opposed to his reception of Christianity ; his sudden conversion, therefore, can only be accounted for by some remarkable circumstance ; and as from the moment in which the event which he describes took place on his way to Damascus, he became a Christian, this is sufficiently in proof that it was convincing to himself. Thirdly, this was a case in which he could not be deceived, for it happened in the day, not in the night. A conversation took place between him and our Lord, the sound of which was heard by them that were with him, although they heard not the distinct words ; and, above all, he was struck blind, and was led into the city by his attendants. There could, then, be no deception in the case ; and the truth of the history being established, it confirms the truth of our Lord's ascension into heaven, for St. Paul saw him in glory, and conversed with him.

A.—St. Paul himself declares that he was “ in labours more abundant ” than the other Apostles.

B.—And justly so ; for Providence opened to him a more extensive field ; and his noble zeal prompted him to ceaseless exertions to the close of life.

A.—Why does he call himself a Roman ?

B.—He was a Roman citizen by birth, as having been born at Tarsus, a Roman colony ; or because some of his ancestors had had the freedom of Rome conferred upon them. In Tarsus he was probably educated in general literature ; and at Jerusalem he studied the law, and the traditions of the Elders, under Gamaliel, “ a Doctor of the law,” before mentioned.

A.—Does not his having learned the trade of a tent-maker seem to contradict the notion, that he had received a liberal education ?

B.—No ; for the most opulent Jews had their children taught mechanical arts, to prepare them for any reverse of fortune.

A.—If you would favour me with a sketch of the labours of St. Paul, it might prepare me for a more profitable reading of his history, as recorded in the Acts.

B.—After he was baptized at Damascus, he went into

Arabia ; and, returning to Damascus, he preached Christ so successfully, that the Jews of that city resolved to put him to death : And, being privately conveyed away, he went up to Jerusalem.

A.—There the disciples, I recollect, were at first much afraid of him ; but, after they had been assured by Barnabas of his real conversion, he was received with joy.

B.—At Jerusalem his preaching produced so much resentment among the Jews, that they plotted his destruction ; the brethren therefore advised him to leave the city. He went from thence into Syria and Cilicia, “preaching the faith which once he destroyed.” Hitherto he had preached only to the Jews ; but when the conversion of Cornelius had visibly opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, Paul and Barnabas left Tarsus, and went to Antioch, the capital of Syria, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. In that city the first Gentile church was formed ; and there the disciples first received the name of Christians.

A.—What had they been before called ?

B.—By their enemies, Nazarenes and Galileans, both names of contumely ; among themselves they were called “disciples” and “brethren.”

A.—Please to proceed.

B.—St. Paul visited Jerusalem again, bearing a charitable contribution from Antioch for “the brethren in Judea,” who were in distress through a famine which had affected the whole land. After his return to Antioch, he and Barnabas were sent by express direction of the Holy Ghost to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles of various countries. This journey occupied about two years, in which they visited Cyprus, Perga in Pamphylia, Antioch in Pisidia, and Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, three cities of Lycaonia ; and then returned to Antioch. Their persecutions and successes on this tour are mentioned in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the Acts. They then remained a considerable time at Antioch, where a dispute was excited by some Jewish Christians visiting Antioch, who insisted upon the circumcision of the Gentile converts. This occasioned Paul and Barnabas another journey to Jerusalem,

to consult the Apostles and Elders there ; who decided in favour of the liberty of Christians from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and from the ordinance of circumcision, which, as the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, was now displaced by the appropriate seals of the Christian covenant. After their return, Paul proposed to Barnabas to visit the churches they had planted : But a dispute having arisen respecting their companions, they separated ; and Paul, taking Silas, travelled through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. Thence he went to Derbe and Lystra, and through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, and proceeded to Troas. There, invited by “a man of Macedonia” in a vision, Paul sailed from Troas to Samothracia, thence to Neapolis, a city of Thrace, and proceeded to Philippi, the principal city of that part of Macedonia. The interesting circumstances attending his labours there, you find recorded in Acts xvi. His next progress was through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, where also he preached with great success, until the unbelieving Jews excited a tumult. He withdrew, therefore, to Berea, where he was heard with candour ; the Bereans searching the Scriptures, to know the truth of his doctrine. From Berea he proceeded to Athens, and in that illustrious seat of learning delivered that fine discourse which you read in Acts xvii. ; the fruit of which was, the founding of a small Christian church. Corinth was his next scene of labour, where he preached with remarkable success, and continued eighteen months ; supporting himself by making tents, in proof of his disinterestedness in the service of the Gospel. From Corinth he sailed to Syria, and thence went to Ephesus, where his stay was at that time short, as he intended to hasten to Jerusalem, to be present at the feast of Pentecost. From Jerusalem he returned to Antioch, thus terminating his second apostolical journey ; during part of which both **Luke** and **Timothy**, as well as **Silas**, were his companions. On his third missionary tour, as we should call it in the present day, he passed through Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the churches ; and thence to Ephesus, where he continued about two years. Here he wrought many miracles ; and so powerful was the effect of his preaching, that great

numbers of the inhabitants of Asia Minor flocked to that city to hear the Gospel, both Jews and Greeks.

A.—Was it not in Ephesus that many who used magical arts, being wrought upon by the Gospel, publicly burned their books?

B.—Yes, to the amount of fifty thousand pieces of silver, or more than one thousand six hundred pounds of our money : “ So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.”

A.—It was here, too, that Demetrius, the maker of silver shrines, excited a tumult against St. Paul : What might these shrines be ?

B.—Ephesus was famous for a temple of Diana, so magnificent as to be reckoned one of the wonders of the world ; and these shrines are supposed to have been small silver models of the temple : And as they were valued only for superstitious purposes, the sale for them declined as the light of the Gospel prevailed.

A.—And so their zeal for Diana sprung, it seems, from their concern for their own interests.

B.—We next find the Apostle preaching again in Macedonia, and making collections for the poor saints in Judea. The liberality of the Gentile churches was on this occasion displayed in a manner very grateful to the feelings of St. Paul. He saw in it the triumphs of a religion of benevolence over the selfishness of man, and the prejudices of nations. From thence he proceeded again to Corinth ; and there also, and in the rest of Achaia, contributions for the poor Christians of Judea were liberally offered. To avoid a plot laid for his life by the Jews, St. Paul did not go from Corinth into Syria ; but passed through Macedonia, and sailed from Philippi to Troas, and from thence went by land to Assos, and thence sailed to Mitylene and Miletus, a place fifty miles south of Ephesus. As he was in haste to go up to Jerusalem, the Elders of the church of Ephesus here met him. To them he gave a most solemn charge ; and as neither expected to meet again on earth, the parting was of the most moving kind, illustrative of the new and strong affections by which Christianity binds the hearts of men together, and of the true “ communion of

saints." The Apostle terminated this his third great evangelical tour at Jerusalem, A.D. 58, after about twenty-three years' most active service in the dissemination of the religion of Christ, and the confirmation of the churches he had founded: For, however short his stay was in any place, his unwearied spirit would not suffer him to remain unemployed.

A.—The account which he would be able to give of the progress of the Gospel would impart great joy to the Apostles and church at Jerusalem.

B.—It did; as you will find in the history: But it prejudiced him the more deeply among the unbelieving Jews, to whom, as a Preacher of salvation to the Gentiles, and an assertor of the non-obligation of the ceremonial law, he was particularly obnoxious. Some Asiatic Jews, therefore, who saw him in the temple, easily succeeded in raising a tumult against him; and he was dragged out of the temple, beaten, and would have been instantly put to death, had not Lysias, the principal Roman Officer then at Jerusalem, rescued him out of their hands. Supposing him, however, to have been guilty of some great crime, he committed him to custody; and eventually, on account of the violence of the Jews, he sent him down to Cæsarea, the residence of Felix, the Roman Governor. Thither the Jews sent down their famous orator Tertullus, to accuse him; but Felix, although he unjustly kept Paul under restraint, treated him as a prisoner at large, and allowed all his friends to have access to him. On one occasion he sent for St. Paul, to speak concerning the faith of Christ before him and his wife Drusilla, a Jewess: And as the prisoner "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come," this unjust and profligate Governor "trembled."

A.—And yet he did not release him!

B.—No; to show how transient such effects may be, he often sent for him afterwards, not to "hear of the faith of Christ," but to induce him to give money for his release.

A.—And because St. Paul refused, I observe, that he left him still a prisoner, when he resigned the government to Festus.

B.—The Jews made another attempt, with the new Governor Festus, to bring Paul to trial, and to obtain a capital conviction ; but no civil offence could be proved against him. Yet the Apostle, fearing, perhaps, that Festus might ultimately be induced by the clamours of the Jews to give way to some unjust proceeding, availed himself of his privilege as a Roman citizen, and appealed to Cæsar, that his case might be tried at Rome by the Emperor himself.

A.—I observe, that, however willing St. Paul was to suffer martyrdom in the way of duty, he neither courted danger, nor neglected to use his civil rights in his own defence.

B.—Which proves that he was not a heated enthusiast, led only by his feelings. He knew his life was a trust, to be faithfully guarded, till his Lord himself should show that he was to lay it down for the sake of his truth.

A.—Soon after this, it appears that St. Paul made his defence before King Agrippa : Who was he ?

B.—The son of Herod Agrippa, whom Claudio had made King of Chalcis, to which Nero added some territory in Judea. He came to Cæsarea to congratulate Festus upon his accession to the government of Judea. Before the assembled courts the Apostle made his defence ; after hearing which, Agrippa declared that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian ; and that if he had not appealed to Cæsar, he might have been set at liberty.

A.—How long was St. Paul kept as a prisoner at large at Cæsarea ?

B.—Two years ; after which he was sent to Rome, as you see in the account given of his long and dangerous voyage in Acts xxvii. Whether he was brought to trial before Nero at this time, does not appear. St. Luke, in the Acts, only says that Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier to guard him, in his own hired house ; where, for two years, “he received all that came in unto him ; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”

A.—Was there a Christian church at Rome previous to St. Paul’s arrival ?

B.—Yes, for several years ; and Christianity flourished there in great purity. St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth a few years before ; and when he was near Rome, we read, that the brethren came out to meet him “as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns ;” the former fifty, and the latter thirty, miles from Rome : So great an interest had been excited in the church there by his coming. And the meeting appears to have been very grateful ; for it is added, “Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.” It is not improbable that the favour of dwelling in his own hired house might be obtained by some Christians of rank, for such there were in Rome ; and that the hire of the house was furnished by them, as St. Paul does not appear to have had any means of defraying the expense. Other distant churches also contributed to his necessities, during this imprisonment.

A.—What is the subsequent history of this great Apostle ?

B.—This is not given in the New Testament. It is concluded, from scattered notices in the writings of the fathers, that, on his liberation, he returned to Jerusalem, and afterwards travelled in Asia Minor, Crete, Macedonia, and Greece, regulating the affairs of the churches ; that he returned to Rome, underwent a second imprisonment there, and finally suffered martyrdom in the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Nero, in the year 65. During his first imprisonment at Rome, he wrote the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and that to Philemon. His Epistle to the Hebrews was written after his release.

A.—The account, given in the Acts of the Apostles, of the spread of Christianity in but a few years, is, indeed, very extraordinary, and yet it was at the same time diffusing itself in many other places not noticed there.

B.—And it may be a good conclusion to the brief remarks we have made on this interesting book, to present you with the excellent observations of a judicious English Prelate, on the early and rapid spread of Christianity : “ We find, in the Acts of the Apostles, and in their Epistles, that the number of converts to the Christian religion began to increase consider-

ably, almost immediately after our Saviour's ascension, and continued increasing to an astonishing degree through every age, till the final establishment of Christianity by Constantine. The first assembly which we meet with of Christ's disciples, and that a few days after his removal from the world, consisted of a hundred and twenty. About a week after this, three thousand were added in one day. And the number of Christians publicly baptized, and publicly associating together, was very soon increased to five thousand. In a few years after this, the converts were described as increasing in great numbers, in great multitudes, and even in myriads, tens of thousands ; and multitudes continued to be added daily ; so that, within about thirty years after our Lord's death, the Gospel was spread, not merely throughout almost all parts of the Roman empire, but even to Parthia and India. It appears, from the Epistles written to several churches by the Apostles, that there were large congregations of Christians, both at Rome, and in all the principal cities of Greece and Asia. This account is confirmed by contemporary Roman historians ; and Pliny, about eighty years after the ascension, complains that this 'superstition,' as he calls it, had seized not cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country ; that the pagan temples were almost deserted, the sacred solemnities suspended, and scarcely any purchaser to be found for the victims. About twenty years after this, Justin Martyr, a Christian writer, declares, that there was no nation of men, whether Greeks or barbarians, not excepting even those savages that wandered in clans from one region to another, and had no fixed habitation, who had not learned to offer prayers and thanksgivings to the Father and Maker of all, in the name of Jesus who was crucified. And thus the church of Christ went on increasing more and more, till, under Constantine, the empire became Christian ; at which time, there is every reason to believe that the Christians were more numerous and more powerful than the Pagans. Now, in what manner can we account for this wonderful and unexampled progress of the Christian religion ?

“ If this religion had set out with flattering the corrupt

passions of mankind, and held up to them the prospect of power, wealth, rank, or pleasure, as the rewards of their conversion ; if it had soothed their vices, humoured their prejudices, and encouraged their ancient superstitions ; if the persons who taught it had been men of brilliant talents, or commanding eloquence ; if they had first proposed it in times of darkness and ignorance, and among savage and barbarous nations ; if they had been seconded by all the influence and authority of the great potentates of the earth, or propagated their doctrines at the head of a victorious army, one might have seen some reason for their extraordinary success. But it is well known that the very reverse of all this was the real truth of the case. It is well known that the first Preachers of the Gospel declared open war against all the follies, the vices, the interests, the inveterate prejudices and favourite superstitions of the world ; that they were, with few exceptions, men of moderate learning, and no artificial rhetoric or powers of persuasion ; that their doctrines were promulgated in an enlightened age, and to the most polished nations, and had all the wit, and learning, and eloquence, and philosophy of the world to contend with ; and that, instead of being aided by the authority and influence of the civil powers, they were opposed, and harassed, and persecuted by them, even to death, with the most unrelenting cruelty ; and all those who embraced their doctrines were exposed to the same hardships and sufferings.

“ Is it then credible, that, under these circumstances, the new religion should have spread, merely by the natural powers of its first propagators, in so short a space, over so large a part of the then known world, without any superior assistance or co-operation ? Did any thing of the kind ever happen in the world before or since ? As, therefore, all human means of success were against them, what else but supernatural means were left for them ? It is clear, almost to demonstration, that they must have been endowed with those miraculous powers, and favoured with that divine assistance, to which they pretended, and which, of course, proved them to be the messengers of heaven.”

CONVERSATION XXI.

St. Paul's Epistles—Epistle to the Romans—Justification by Faith—Moral State of Gentiles and Jews—Regeneration—Calling of the Gentiles—Direct Influences of the Holy Spirit—Personal Holiness—Practical Religion—First Epistle to the Corinthians.

A.—I AM very grateful for the observations you have made upon the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles ; but much study appears to me to be necessary to understand the Epistles.

B.—Yes, to understand them in every part ; although their leading doctrines and design are plain to the most unlearned.

A.—Has not the style of St. Paul been regarded as involved and dark ?

B.—To critics who are not spiritual men, he must be a very difficult writer, or rather, it is impossible for such persons to interpret him. But to spiritual men his reasoning will appear to be most cogent and convincing. He has difficulties, arising from his depth of thought, his abrupt transitions, and the references he makes to the opinions current at that time, and which are sometimes refuted without being fully stated ; but even these generally give way to patient investigation, and richly reward the attention by showing that he wrote, as St. Peter says, “ according to the wisdom given to him.” No Apostle is so full, so clear, so copious on the glory of the person and offices of Christ ; on the connexion between the law and the Gospel ; on the meaning of ancient types ; on the atonement of Christ ; on justification by faith ; on the high privileges of believers ; on the union of the soul by faith with the divine fulness ; on the work of the Spirit in the heart ; and on relative duties. As he was the Apostle of us Gentiles, so has he left us, in his wonderful Epistles,—writings charged with the richest influence of inspiration,—the means of

becoming fully “ wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” In reviewing these Epistles, though much must be left to your future investigation, and as to difficult texts I must, for want of time, leave you to consult the best expositors ; yet I shall not despair, if you continue that attention which you have hitherto paid to my remarks, to enable you very satisfactorily to comprehend the general argument of each Epistle, and the bearing of the principal parts upon the main design.

A.—I will endeavour to follow your observations with the attention due to so important a part of the word of God.

B.—You can rightly conceive of the importance of the Epistles, only by bearing in mind, that in them is embodied the substance of those expositions of the Old Testament Scriptures which our Lord opened to the understandings of his Apostles after his resurrection, and those truths which the Holy Spirit brought to their remembrance, or taught to them, after they were, according to the promise of their Lord, endued with “ power from on high.” The writings of the Apostles are, in truth, to be considered as containing those “ many things” which Christ declares he had to say to his disciples, but which they could not then “ bear.” Those he taught them by his Holy Spirit, and they teach them to us.

A.—Was the Epistle to the Romans written first?

B.—No ; but it is placed first because it treats chiefly of the great doctrine of justification by faith.

A.—What is the evangelical sense of justification ?

B.—The pardon or remission of sin, through the atoning merits of the death of Christ.

A.—What is justifying faith ?

B.—That entire trust of a penitent sinner upon the merits of Christ’s atonement, which excludes all dependence upon any thing beside, as the ground or reason of this forgiveness.

A.—Then you make a distinction between belief in the sense of merely receiving a doctrine as true, and believing as implying trust ?

B.—Certainly ; the one being the work of the intellect and

will, the other the act of a penitent and contrite heart : “ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

A.—What, then, is the course of the Apostle’s argument ?

B.—He shows, first, and at large, the awfully immoral state of the heathen world ; and then, that the Jews, who had the written law, even with all their boasted privileges, practised the same vices, and were even liable to a greater punishment.

A.—Are his representations on the immoralities of Gentiles and Jews confirmed by history ?

B.—They are proved from their own writers in every point ; and the shameful immoralities connected with every modern heathen system are now matters of undeniable fact, although infidel authors used formerly to speak of whole nations of virtuous Heathens, whose character, now it is better known, forms an exact counterpart to that drawn with so dark a pencil in the first chapter of this Epistle.

A.—Is it not essential to the Apostle’s argument to show, that “ all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ? ” And, if so, how does the actual existence of great crimes among even great numbers of people, and in different ages, prove more than that the majority have sinned ?

B.—But where is your innocent minority to be found ? Before you attempt to answer this question, recollect what is said in our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, and how he teaches that evil thoughts and desires are transgressions of that law, as well as outward acts ; and remember, also, that the epitome of that law is, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself ; ” and further, that this law has never been relaxed, but is in full force as to all men, in all ages. Tried, then, by this rule, will you find a just man upon earth who has never sinned ?

A.—Certainly not.

B.—But we have not yet reached the whole truth. How, think you, is this general corruption of manners to be accounted for, but from a corrupt nature ?

A.—I see no other way of accounting for it ; for if men by nature had not been prone to evil, no examples could have so generally corrupted them.

B.—Then, if the nature of man be prone to evil, and that nature was not corrupted in its source in our first parents according to the scriptural account, we must fix upon some subsequent time, when it suffered this corruption ; and if we fix this below the flood, then one or more leading branches only of the Noahic family was infected by it, and the rest escaped. But then, if any branches escaped, their descendants would be prone to good, and not to evil ; and if we find none such in the world, but that human nature in all places exhibits the same evil tendencies, then have we no way of accounting for this fact but by allowing that this evil nature is common to all, as descending from one fallen pair, and that, left without the regenerating grace of God, all must necessarily sin, which is the Apostle's doctrine.

A.—What, then, does St. Paul conclude from the fact that all have sinned ?

B.—That the whole world is guilty before God, and, therefore, liable to that wrath which is “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”

A.—But the Jews, adopting, as you have before said, the error of the sect of the Pharisees, thought that they could be justified by the works of the law : Did they mean obedience to the moral or to the ceremonial law ?

B.—To both ; as acts of moral obedience to divine precepts. And the Apostle refutes the possibility of thus obtaining justification, by this plain argument : “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

A.—In what does the force of this argument lie ?

B.—In this : If by the law is the knowledge of sin, so that every individual is convicted of sin by it, and must be, since all have sinned ; and if the law denounces a curse against all transgressors, and has no promise of remission ; plainly, therefore, it follows, that condemnation only, and not justification, can come from the law.

A.—This I plainly see ; but then if it be just in the law to condemn, how can it be reconciled to its justice to allow of the pardon of the sinner even by the Gospel ?

B.—This brings in the grand doctrine of the atonement of Christ, which reconciles the two. That atonement meets the demand of justice, because it presents, as a satisfaction to it, the death of a Being of infinite dignity in the place and stead of guilty men. Hence the Apostle argues, that the pardon of sin through faith in this atonement is a manifestation of God's righteousness or justice, as truly as it is a manifestation of his mercy. "Whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness ; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

A.—Then the wisdom of God, as well as his love, is seen in our redemption : He pardons sin only through the merits of Christ's death, and by so doing maintains his righteous character and administration as the Governor of the world, by exacting the penalty of his violated law from his own Son.

B.—Yes ; and by leaving still under its curse all who refuse to repent, forsake their sins, and believe in Christ ; and that, too, with an unspeakable aggravation of their guilt and punishment. But further, the Apostle proves that this doctrine of justification by faith alone was not a new one, and presses the argument upon the Jews by the example of Abraham, whose justification was by faith ; for "Abraham believed God," in the promises which God made to him respecting the promised Seed, "and it was counted to him for righteousness ;" which phrase, as I before stated, is of the same import as justification, or the forgiveness of sin.

A.—This doctrine of free and gratuitous justification has been objected to, as leading to licentiousness of life.

B.—And the Apostle anticipated this, and, therefore, in the sixth chapter shows, that it is impossible that they "who are dead to sin should live any longer therein ;" and thus he also introduces our Lord's own doctrine of regeneration or the being born of the Spirit, which, although distinct from justification as an act, always accompanies it in point of time. By justification we are said to be in Christ, that is, we become

personal partakers of the benefits of his death, and stand united to him as his people ; but he that is in Christ is a new creature, and dies to sin.

A.—Every justified man is, therefore, a regenerate man.

B.—Just so ; and in the seventh chapter the Apostle proves that the law is no more able to regenerate than it is to justify ; since the utmost it can do is to discover the extent and hopelessness of our slavery to sin, leaving us to cry out, “ O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” a deliverance which is effected by Christ : For those that are in him, as we read in the next chapter, are not only free from condemnation, but “ walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

A.—But if the Apostle in this chapter speaks not of himself, why does he speak in the first person ?

B.—He may speak of his own experience when under the law, that is, under the bondage and condemnation which it reveals to a man enlightened and convinced by it ; but not of his experience as a believer, for in that character he speaks in the next chapter, and says, “ For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law,” or power, “ of sin and death.” In both cases he is, however, rather to be considered as speaking general truths in his own person, a common mode with all writers. The conclusion of his argument, therefore, is, that from the law we, as guilty creatures, can derive nothing but the knowledge of sin, and its consequent penalty ; but that a true faith in the atonement of Christ becomes the certain instrument of our gratuitous pardon and exemption from condemnation, in which state of acceptance we receive the regenerating Spirit of God, and are freed from the power of sin, as well as of death.

A.—Does not St. Paul also represent this blessed change as producing a high degree of felicity ?

B.—He does ; and grounds this joy upon another important doctrine ; which is, that although justification is an act of God to which man cannot be privy, yet, whenever it takes place, the Holy Spirit bears witness to it, by a direct impression upon our spirits, that we are the children of God. It is thus

that this great fact is ascertained ; and it follows that, as children, we are heirs of the heavenly inheritance. This leads the Apostle to console Christians under their sufferings in the present life by those fine and inspiring views of the glorious privileges and eternal hopes which, in the eighth chapter of this Epistle, are set before them with so much depth and vigour of thought, and nobleness of expression. But another great doctrinal feature in this Epistle is the calling of the Gentiles to an equal participation with the Jews of the blessings of Messiah's kingdom.

A.—To this, I suppose, he was led by the opposition or prejudices of the Jews ?

B.—And therefore this subject is found in most of his Epistles, and in some of them largely dwelt upon. It, indeed, often influences his modes of expression when the subject is not directly before him ; so full was his enlarged mind of this great and, to the Gentiles, most important subject ?

A.—What is the course of his argument on this point ?

B.—He lays it down in the ninth chapter, that to call particular people to superior religious privileges, is a sovereign right of God, not to be questioned ; for though in matters of justice he deals equally, yet, in the dispensation of grace and favour, there is a variety of administration ; which is the same principle as that laid down by our Lord himself in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, “ Cannot I do what I will with mine own ? ” According to this principle, he formerly chose or elected the seed of Abraham to be his peculiar people, and visible church ; then, of the seed of Abraham, he chose the descendants of Isaac in preference to those of Ishmael ; and of the seed of Isaac, the family of Jacob in preference to that of Esau. Of those whom he thus chose to be his peculiar people, he required obedience in proportion to their superior religious advantages, and visited their transgressions of his covenants with more eminent and marked punishments. Thus he cast off the ten tribes long before the two ; thus the two were carried away into Babylon, but restored ; and finally, on account of their unbelief, were placed under sentence of entire rejection as the peculiar people

of God ; so that the believing Gentiles every where might be called to this distinction, and taken into special covenant with God.

A.—Why did he so largely dwell on these topics in the Epistle to the Romans ?

B.—Because that church, like most other of the primitive churches, was composed both of Gentile and Jewish believers, he writes so as to instruct both. He shows the believing Gentiles that they were now chosen to be the church and peculiar people of God, and that the Jewish superiority had ceased ; and that this was done according to the eternal purpose of God. Hence he speaks of the predestination of the believing Gentiles to these privileges and their accompanying spiritual advantages : For “whom he did predestinate, them he also called,” by the Gospel ; “and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified ;” these spiritual blessings being bestowed upon the Gentiles in consequence of their calling, as fully as upon the Jews who thought them peculiar to themselves, or theirs at least in a superior degree. Having exhibited in this manner the unmerited mercy of God to the Gentiles, he then instructs the Jews, to whom this doctrine of the calling of the Gentiles was always offensive, because it implied their rejection as a church ; that as to the right of God to show mercy in the way of peculiar privilege, the Dispenser of all grace was at as much liberty to call the Gentiles to be his people, as formerly to call the Jews in preference to the descendants of Esau, whom “he hated,” that is, in the Hebrew mode of speaking, as we have before observed, loved less than Jacob. Every believing Jew, indeed, was called to enter the church composed of believers of all nations, and on the term of equality with the Gentiles ; but their peculiarity as a people was subverted by the introduction of a new dispensation ; and for their unbelief and wickedness, their nation was now to be judged and punished. Persons so eminently rebellious were to be made examples of God’s vengeance, like Pharaoh ; and, as when the vessel is marred in the potter’s hand, through the bad temper of the clay, instead of a vessel to honour, he makes it a vessel

to dishonour ; or as a vessel is broken, so God would humble and break the unbelieving nation of the Jews. Both these figures were used by Jeremiah, to represent the calamity of the Babylonian conquest and captivity, and are here applied to the rejection of the Jews and their destruction. This whole proceeding is, however, perfectly judicial, not arbitrary. As the sins of the Jews had led to their being placed in a state of dishonour, that is, in a captive state in Babylon, and also as they had then provoked God to break their city and state by his judgments, as a potter's vessel is broken ; so this two-fold calamity, only to be still more severely inflicted, was in reserve for the Jews of that day ; they were to be made “vessels of dishonour,” by being reduced to a captive and debased state among the nations, and their city and state, “a vessel of wrath, endured with much longsuffering,” was in a few years to be broken to pieces by the Roman invasion.

A.—Thus, then, I perceive that he establishes the sovereign right of God to show mercy to the Gentiles ; and his justice in punishing the Jews.

B.—But in the eleventh chapter, he represents the rejection of his ancient people as having a limit, and predicts the restoration of the Jews to the church, through faith in Christ.

A.—You said that he often incidentally adverts to this calling and election of the Gentiles according to the foreknowledge or purpose of God, in his other Epistles.

B.—And for the twofold reason, that he might answer the objections of the Jews, who formed a part of most of the primitive churches, or resided in the places where they were established ; and to excite the gratitude of the Gentiles. Thus he commences his Epistle to the Ephesians, by a devout thanksgiving on this subject : “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love ; having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Christ Jesus.” The Gentiles were chosen or elected to be the

church of Christ, and thus were entitled to its fulness of spiritual blessings.

A.—But is there not an election of individuals, as well as bodies of people?

B.—Yes; but the election is of a different kind. Bodies of men are elected to religious privileges, independent of their faith, and whilst yet impenitent and unbelieving; individuals are elected into the true church and family of God upon their believing. St. Paul generally speaks of the former; St. Peter speaks of the latter, when he says, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.” “Many are called, but few chosen,” says our Lord; that is, few individuals, but only because they do not obey the call.

A.—What other doctrinal point is treated in this Epistle?

B.—The doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit; which, though not formally proposed, is found in this and all other of the writings of St. Paul. To his direct operations upon the soul of man, its spiritual life; its power to repent and trust in Christ; its assurance of forgiveness and adoption; devotional habits; and the spiritual direction of the affections, are all attributed. These subjects are presented under a variety of views, both admonitory and encouraging, in all his Epistles.

A.—Intimately connected with this, I presume, is the doctrine of practical holiness.

B.—Not merely intimately, but essentially. The Apostles ground all holiness upon that regeneration of the soul which is effected by the Holy Spirit; and make all its pure, and benevolent, and heavenly affections, “the fruits of the Spirit.” The entire sanctification of the soul from sin is held forth, both as necessary to qualify us for heaven, and as the result of that baptism of the Spirit which we receive in answer to prayer, and through faith in Christ. Hence the constant exhortations we see addressed to believers, to cleanse themselves, by the means which God has appointed, from all filthiness, not only of the flesh, but of the spirit, “perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.”

A.—But this doctrine of direct Divine influence does not displace the efforts of men ?

B.—It is our only true encouragement to effort ; for, without that, effort would be hopeless, as the experience of all men in all ages has proved. It is therefore for this reason that St. Paul exhorts us, in another Epistle, to “ work out our own salvation with fear and trembling ; because it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

A.—The close of the Epistle abounds in exhortations to various graces and duties.

B.—Yes ; and as I cannot stay to point them out either in this or in the other Epistles particularly, I must content myself by observing generally, that the Epistles of St. Paul bear this practical character in an eminent degree ; for the most doctrinal of them are remarkable for their hortatory conclusions. Doctrine was taught by the Apostle as necessary to faith in Christ ; faith as necessary to remission of sin and regeneration ; and these, as necessary to a holy practice ; all morality not springing from a regenerate nature, and that spiritual life which faith in Christ, and the exercises of devotion pour into the heart, being regarded by him as a vain and unacceptable show of virtue, delusive only to the souls of men. But as the duties and relations of life are numerous, directions as to conduct in each were necessary, and are so admirably delivered in the general principles or the particular precepts of St. Paul, that we may appeal to the greatest enemies of the Gospel to say, whether if all those kind and pure affections which they recommend were implanted in the hearts of all men ; and the duties of Kings and subjects, masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children, the rich and the poor, were all perfectly practised, man would not exhibit a picture of restoration to his original rectitude and moral glory, and almost all misery be banished from the earth ? These are subjects which you must read, understand, and remember for yourself. You will then prove that the Day-spring from on high has visited you, to guide your feet into the way of peace.

A.—I have indeed just turned to a part of the twelfth

chapter ; and surely no precepts so pure, so benevolent, so opposed to the disturbing and malignant passions, and at once so spiritual and practical, were ever delivered.

B.—Read the passage ; for we can never be too often reminded of these things.

A.—“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil : Cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love ; in honour preferring one another ; not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord ; rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer ; distributing to the necessity of saints ; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you : Bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath : For it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

B.—And thus you see how, in this doctrinal Epistle, St. Paul connects faith with all holy affections and holy works. The faith by which we are saved, joins us to Christ ; and “he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.” He has “the mind that was in Christ,” and thus his “faith works by love.”

A.—Who were those weaker brethren mentioned by St. Paul in the fourteenth chapter, whom he commends to the tender consideration of those who were strong in faith ?

B.—They were the Jewish converts, who, from their reverence for the law of Moses, and their national customs, were still very scrupulous as to particular meats, and the observance of certain days or Jewish festivals. Many of these were things purely indifferent ; and we have here a fine display of the ele-

vated character of St. Paul. When Jewish observances were set up as necessary to salvation, or as binding upon the conscience, he dealt with such teachers with unsparing hand, as enemies of the cross of Christ, that is, of the sufficiency of his atonement. A fundamental principle was then at stake, and he was not influenced by a false liberality, like that of modern times, to treat such an error with indifference. But when these Jewish scruples were the result of prejudices, or a mistaken judgment, or a conscience but partially instructed, no tenderness could be greater than that of St. Paul, willing then to become all things to all men, that he might gain some, and careful to apportion "milk," or the milder views of Christian liberty from these Levitical ordinances, "to babes," and "strong meat" to the more adult in the true evangelical doctrine. Thus he throws the shield of his authority, in this chapter, over the weak believer; and on all he inculcates charity in things indifferent. "He that regardeth a day, regardeth it" according to his views "unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not a day, to the Lord," as believing that he acts according to his will, "he doth not regard it." Great indeed would have been the peace of the churches in all ages, if Christians had put this charitable construction, in matters of inconsequential opinion, upon their respective differences.

A.—The Epistle concludes with numerous salutations.

B.—These were either from St. Paul to the leading Christians at Rome, who were known to him by report, or whom he had met with in other parts; or from his acquaintance at Corinth, from whence the Epistle was written, and his fellow-labourers. They show the love which Christians in that age bore toward each other "in the Lord," and the handsome courteousness with which the Apostle commends the excellent qualities and good works of those who had distinguished themselves for zeal, holiness, and hospitality,—an important branch of virtue in an age in which it was so desirable for Christians to entertain each other when from home, lest they should mix with idolaters. A grave and graceful politeness marks St. Paul's manner; and his heart was manifestly very susceptible of gratitude for any kindness done to him or his friends.

Of these qualities, the salutations in this and the other Epistles are interesting proofs, and show that true faithfulness, zeal, and honesty abhor all rude and boorish behaviour.

A.—When was the First Epistle to the Corinthians written ?

B.—In the year fifty-six. St. Paul commences it by reproving this church for its tendency to form itself into parties ; one saying, “ I am of Paul ; ” another, “ I am of Apollos ; ” another, and principally perhaps the Jewish converts, “ I am of Peter ; ” and a fourth, pretending to understand Christian doctrines better than any of their teachers, “ I am of Christ.”

A.—The Apostle, I perceive, has two arguments by which to repress this dangerous disposition. The first is, that the Apostles and Evangelists were all but Ministers of a common grace from Him who only could give increase to their labours ; and the other, that the church had a common interest in them, and that their various talents had been dispensed for its edification : “ All are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.”

B.—He also defends his simple mode of preaching Christ, against some who appear to have been attracted by the rhetorical and philosophic harangues of teachers who had endeavoured to amalgamate the wisdom of the Greeks with the Christian system.

A.—How does he proceed ?

B.—By pouring contempt upon this boasted wisdom, which he had studied formerly, more deeply, probably, than these rival teachers. He calls it “ the wisdom of words,” making “ the cross of Christ of none effect.” He appeals to the facts, that “ the world by” this “ wisdom knew not God ; ” whilst it had pleased God by the preaching which they considered foolishness to save men, that is, actually to deliver them from ignorance, from the wrath of God, and from sinful habits. He utters a triumphant challenge on this subject : “ Where is the wise ? ” the philosopher of the Greeks. “ Where is the scribe ? ” the learned expositor of every matter relative to the Jewish law. “ Where is the disputer of this world ? ” the

man who affects deep disquisitions, and argues on subtleties. “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world,” by bringing its moral powerlessness into contrast with the saving efficiency of the Gospel? Finally, he shows that true wisdom lay in that very simplicity of the Gospel which these affected sophists treated with contempt: “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world to our glory;” that this wisdom was a revelation from the Spirit of God, which none of the Greek schools could pretend; and that he spoke it “not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” Thus he expresses how little is the amount, and how light the authority, of the utmost wisdom that can be acquired in the schools of human learning, in comparison of that illumination which was imparted to the Apostles by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, the fountain of truth and knowledge.

A.—As the Corinthian church was in great danger from such boasting and delusive teachers, did the Apostle use any means beside writing this Epistle to guard against them?

B.—He sent Timothy to Corinth, of whom he speaks in the following honourable and affectionate manner: “I have sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.” But to proceed: He sharply reproves the Corinthians for not having expelled a notorious offender, and commands them to put him away, and thus to maintain a holy discipline. He reproves them for entering into law-suits, instead of adjusting their disputes before their own prudent brethren; strongly warns them against immoralities; gives advice on the subject of marriage, and things offered to idols; and shows that they who give themselves up to preach the Gospel, are to be supported by the churches. He then justifies his own conduct in the exercise of his ministry; and concludes the ninth chapter with a passage, on which it is necessary to make a remark, because it contains allusions to the public games so celebrated among the Greeks, and from which you will find, that St. Paul,

in his writings, frequently borrows expressive images. Please to read the last four verses.

A.—“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so-fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

B.—This whole passage is to be explained by referring to the Grecian games just mentioned. Of these, some were celebrated on the isthmus on which Corinth was situated, and thence were denominated Isthmian. With the greatest propriety, therefore, the Apostle says, “Know ye not,” &c.; for every Corinthian was perfectly acquainted with each minute circumstance of these exercises, a solemnity every way so splendid and pompous, that there was no danger that the Apostle’s allusions to it, in this and other parts of his writings, should appear low and degrading to his subject. In running, the racers were bound to observe the course and the rules of the race, and to exert their utmost vigour in it. The Corinthians, therefore, are exhorted so to run as to obtain; that is, so to observe the rules prescribed by Christ, the Judge in their Christian course, and to press forward so vigorously, as to have the prize awarded to them. Again: Those who contended in those games, at wrestling and boxing, were “temperate in all things.” The game here alluded to was the *pancratium*, which united both wrestling and boxing; and it was indispensably necessary that the candidates should submit to the severe regimen, and the preparatory exercises, regulated and directed by persons appointed daily to superintend them. The body was to be purified by strict temperance, braced by exercise, and hardened by being inured to the changes of the atmosphere. “Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.” Here a fine comparison is made between the crowns or garlands given to the conquerors in the

Olympian and Isthmian games, and those which are reserved for them who conquer in the Christian conflict. The one, although great honour was attached to it, was but a fading, withering wreath of wild olives ; the other is immortal, ever-blooming, a crown of glory that fadeth not away : And the Apostle's argument is, that we ought not to suffer ourselves to be outdone by them whose only reward is human applause, in the rigour of our preparatory discipline, in keeping the body in subjection, or in the ardour of our efforts. Many other fine allusions to these public exercises, at which all the rank of the states of Greece assembled, and an immense concourse of people, you will find in the Epistles, the spirit of which would be especially felt by the Greek reader, because of the nationality and celebrity of these exercises.

A.—In the tenth chapter, the Apostle cautions them against things offered to idols : How am I to understand this ?

B.—The Heathens used publicly to feast upon the sacrifices offered to their idols ; and the Apostle most solemnly warns the Corinthians, by the example of God's judgments formerly inflicted upon the Israelites for idolatry, to flee from it, and to bear their testimony against it, by abstaining wholly from such feasts. These sacrifices were also sold in the public markets, after having been offered in the idol-temple ; and some Christians were scrupulous as to eating these, even at home. This, however, the Apostle does not forbid, provided their weaker brethren were not offended by it ; but if they were present, their scruples were to be delicately respected, the Christian rule being, to forbear things which in many cases may be lawful, if a brother's edification may be thereby promoted. The Apostle proceeds to give them directions for the decent performance of divine worship ; and corrects some abuses which had crept into their mode of celebrating the Lord's supper, which had become with them a convivial feast, in imitation of the feasts in the heathen temples, instead of a solemn religious service.

A.—The Corinthian church appears, by what follows, to have been richly endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

B.—And to show how prone men are to abuse the greatest blessings, these very gifts appear to have been employed, by some of those who had received them, to foment parties in the church, to establish claims of superiority above one another, and to feed vanity by an unnecessary exhibition of them, and especially of the gift of tongues. The practical ends for which these powers had been given, and for which only they could be lawfully employed, namely, to promote the unity, growth, and harmony of the church, compared by the Apostle to the human frame, the members of which are tempered together, and all sympathize with each other, are forcibly pointed out; and his bold allegory, from the body and its members, is very finely wrought out and sustained.

A.—What follows in this Epistle?

B.—Two of the most eloquent and important passages which St. Paul himself ever penned. The first is his description of charity; the second, that celebrated discourse on the resurrection, which forms so sublime and appropriate a part of our burial service. The first shows the power of grace over the soul of man, destroying its natural selfishness, malignity, hatred, and censoriousness, by implanting that eminent fruit of the Spirit, the “charity” which “suffereth long and is kind,” which “envieth not, thinketh no evil,” &c.; and which shall endure, the bond of eternal union among the blessed in heaven, when tongues have ceased, and knowledge—the knowledge of the present state, in which men so often desire to excel, rather than in love—shall be absorbed in the light of eternity, and vanish, like the misty scenes of twilight before the risen sun. Never was a virtue so beautifully portrayed in language, or enforced by motives so powerfully impressive. Where that is not, every thing, argues the Apostle, even in religion, is nothing. Tongues of men or angels, the gift of prophecy, the knowledge of mysteries, miraculous faith, unbounded almsgiving, and a martyr’s constancy, cannot, without this, make me more than a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. The second (chapter xv.) speaks of the triumphs of the same grace over the mortality

of the body ; teaches us that the believing dead, who sleep in Christ, shall be raised up spiritual, deathless, and bearing the image of the glorified second Man, "the Lord from heaven," at his second advent. And having established the resurrection against those who denied this great doctrine, and presented many lofty views of the glory and perfection of the resurrection body, he sums up the whole in a sublime strain of triumph, uttered by an exulting faith, over death and the grave ; strips them of all their terrors, challenges their victory, and lays the glory of this victory of mortal man over death itself at the feet of Him by whose power and grace it is achieved : "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

CONVERSATION XXII.

Second Epistle to the Corinthians—Galatians—Ephesians—Ministers of the Church—Church Discipline—Philippians.

A.—IN the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul appears to defend himself against the attacks of opponents : Who were they ?

B.—Chiefly Hellenistic Judaizing teachers, who had studied the rhetoric and philosophy of the Greeks, which they valued themselves upon ; and especially as they applied both, as they thought, to the service of Christianity. St. Paul despised their vanity ; guards the simplicity of the Gospel against their corruptions ; and as they had endeavoured to undervalue him among the Corinthians, as not being one of the eleven Apostles chosen by our Lord, he asserts his apostolic office as conferred upon him by Christ himself, who had appeared to him, not only on the way to Damascus, but in several other revelations. There are many very beautiful passages in this Epistle, on which you may most profitably meditate ; especially the grateful manner in which St. Paul mentions the supports which he and his fellow-labourers had received under the persecutions and dangers to which they had been exposed, since he before wrote to them ; his tender concern lest the reproofs of his former Epistle should have inflicted upon the Corinthians too deep a sorrow ; the triumphant spirit in which he surveys the successes of the Gospel ; and the very striking and highly-wrought third chapter, in which he charges the Jewish teachers with obscuring the glory of the Gospel, by comparing them to Moses, who put a veil upon his face, whilst he and the true Preachers of Christ not only with unveiled face beheld “the glory of the Lord” themselves, but by “using great plainness of speech” reflected it upon the unveiled countenance of the body of believers ; so that they were changed into the same image. In this striking allegory, he with the finest art institutes a contrast

both between the law and the Gospel, and between the Judaizing teacher and the true Minister of “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” Throughout this Epistle, besides many other subjects of the greatest importance, incidentally noticed, the manner in which St. Paul defends himself against the insinuations of the factious and self-sufficient men before alluded to is marked by great dignity and spirit.

A.—It must have been very painful to such a man to be obliged to defend himself.

B.—Truly so ; but faction has no respect even to the most venerable and holy men. The aged Samuel was thus put upon his defence before the people ; and his solemn and calm challenges as to the purity with which he had fulfilled the office of Judge of Israel bear a strong resemblance to the defences which bad or prejudiced men called forth from St. Paul. He is compelled to speak of his labours, revelations, and motives ; but throughout the whole of this delicate and painful apology, you perceive how careful he is to give the glory of the whole of his attainments, deliverances, and successes, to his Lord.

A.—In again reading through this very beautiful Epistle, which contains a great variety of topics, these general observations will afford me considerable assistance ; but there are some points on which I beg to make some inquiry : What does the Apostle mean, in the fourth chapter, by being “troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ?”

B.—And you may add what he says in another place : “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” These are apparent contradictions ; and such language would only be rational in the mouth of a Christian.

A.—Why in his ?

B.—Because his inward peace and joy are independent of outward things ; and he can rejoice whilst he sorrows ; be at once calm and careful, “perplexed,” and recollected.

A.—You appear to make the matter still more paradoxical.

B.—But the whole difficulty will be solved if you read the conclusion of the chapter, where the Apostle gives the reason

of the whole case : “ For which cause we faint not ” under these sorrows and sufferings ; they neither discourage nor affright us, but are, on the contrary, the ground of a higher hope ; “ for though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day ; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen,” regard them not as of any real weight or value, “ but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” “ Thus,” as an ancient Prelate observed, “ the testimony of a good conscience within, the light of God’s countenance from above, and faith’s view of a sorrowless world beyond, put more joy into the heart than any outward thing can put of sorrow.”

A.—Truly I see how reasonable it is for a Christian to “ rejoice evermore ; ” and, by the grace of God, how possible. But what does the Apostle mean in chapter v. 4 : “ For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened ; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon ? ”

B.—He means that he wished not to remain “ unclothed,” or in a disembodied state ; but to be “ clothed upon ” with the body glorified at the resurrection. You find a strictly parallel passage in Romans viii. 23 : “ And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” You see, in both these passages, for what the Apostle groaned ; that only truly perfect state of man, which consists in the eternal union of a glorified body and a glorified spirit.

A.—As the Apostle speaks, in the First Epistle, of his having sent Timothy to this church, so in this he commends Titus to them, whom he had sent on a like mission. But who was “ the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches ? ” (Chapter viii. 18.)

B.—All the ancients interpreted this of St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, who was praised in all the churches for the Gospel which he wrote.

A.—St. Paul, in this Epistle, appears to be very anxious respecting the collection which he was making in all the Gentile churches for the poor Christians of Judea.

B.—And not only anxious for its success, but that these churches might show the effect of Christianity upon them by their abounding in the grace of liberality. You will not fail to notice also the moving argument by which the Apostle urges every act of this kind upon us : “ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor ; that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

A.—And I remark, also, that trust in Providence is another motive urged by the Apostle : “ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” (Chapter ix. 8.)

B.—You may also notice an important truth in verse 11 : “ Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness ; ” where we are taught that, in whatever degree we are enriched by God’s providence, the end is all bountifulness to others. Thus Christianity triumphed over the selfishness and covetousness of the Gentiles, to whom these were, indeed, new doctrines.

A.—When the Apostle speaks, in chapter xii., of his having known a man in Christ, about fourteen years before, who was caught up into Paradise, does he mean himself ?

B.—So the whole discourse shows. This mode of speaking marks the Apostle’s modesty, and indicates that, although these visions had occurred more than fourteen years before, he had not, it seems, ever mentioned them until now, when his apostleship having been questioned by his enemies, probably because he was not one of the twelve, he defends it as first committed to him by Christ himself, and afterwards confirmed by various revelations and visions from him.

A.—What was his thorn in the flesh ?

B.—Conjectures are idle on this point, although they have been largely indulged in. All we can with any probability assert is, that it was some visible bodily infirmity, because he makes allusion to such an affliction in several parts of his writ-

ings ; especially in Galatians iv. 14 : “ And my temptation, which was in my flesh, ye despised not.”

A.—The apostolic benediction, in its full form, occurs, I think, first at the conclusion of this Epistle : “ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.”

B.—And we have here plainly, as in the form of baptism, (Matt. xxviii. 19,) the names of the sacred Trinity. The words contain a prayer for the highest blessings and benefits of which the Corinthians could possibly be made partakers ; —all that love which doth or can flow from the Father ; all that grace which was purchased by the Son ; and all that fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit, and communication from him, which might render them meet for the service of Christ on earth, and for the full and final enjoyment of him in heaven.

A.—Who were the Galatians, to whom St. Paul addresses his next Epistle ?

B.—The inhabitants of Galatia, a part of Asia Minor, which derived its name from the Gauls, who, about 240 years before Christ, took possession of it by force of arms, and settled there. The churches in Galatia, as before stated, were the fruits of St. Paul’s ministry in the course of his second apostolical journey, which was about the year 51. Some time after his departure, they had been perverted by certain Judaizing teachers, who inculcated the necessity of circumcision, and the observance of the law of Moses.

A.—Is not the doctrinal argument, on the justification and adoption of believers, pursued in the Epistle to the Galatians, similar to that in the Romans ?

B.—It is, only with this difference, that the same class of Judaizing teachers who had troubled the church at Antioch, had more expressly taught the Galatian churches, that circumcision, along with faith in Christ, was necessary to their justification.

A.—What is the substance of the Apostle’s argument against this notion ?

B.—That when circumcision was enforced as a matter of

necessity, and especially as necessary to justification, it implied the denial of the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, and thus re-established the destructive doctrine of justification by the works of the law. It served, therefore, to seduce Christians from their liberty in Christ back again into legal bondage, and so implied a forfeiture of salvation. This strong and just view of the case accounts for the Apostle's great earnestness in this Epistle, and his expostulatory manner of addressing the Galatian churches.

A.—Judging from St. Paul's defence of his apostleship with which the Epistle commences, it would appear that the Jewish teachers here also, as in Corinth, had represented his authority as inferior to that of the other Apostles.

B.—In defence, therefore, of his equal authority, he says, that although he had been a persecutor, "it pleased God to reveal his Son in me," or rather to me, and by this revelation (for it was essential to an Apostle to have seen Christ,) he constituted him his messenger to the Heathen. Further, he says, that when he went up to Jerusalem, and saw Peter, James, and John, the pillars of the church there, in the conference he had with them, "they added nothing to me," that is, they neither found fault with his doctrine, nor could teach him any thing more than he had received by revelation from Christ; and finally that, so far from being of an inferior office or calling to them, when Peter leaned too much to the Judaizers at Antioch he "withstood him to his face."

A.—Was there then any difference between St. Paul's doctrine and that of St. Peter?

B.—Certainly not; but the latter carried his compliance with the prejudices of the Jews too far, so as to endanger that liberty which the Gospel gave to the Gentiles from the yoke of the ceremonial law. St. Peter, in this case, evidently yielded to St. Paul; and so testified his agreement with him. The evil was, that some of the false teachers took occasion from this instance of Peter's want of firmness, to preach a doctrine which St. Peter himself rejected, and, equally with St. Paul, abhorred,—the necessity of circumcision and legal observances in order to justification. The Apostle, therefore,

having established his authority, enters upon the proof that we are justified by faith alone, and proceeds to illustrate it, as in the Epistle to the Romans, by the example of Abraham, an instance which concluded the whole case with a consistent Jew, because taken from his own Scriptures. Still further, he shows that the promise to Abraham, “ In thee shall all nations be blessed,” was a covenant in which God had engaged to justify the Heathen through faith ; and that this covenant, “ which was confirmed before of God in Christ,” the Mosaic “ law which was four hundred and thirty years after could not disannul.” He then teaches that there is no difference between the uncircumcised believing Gentile, and the believing Jew, under this new covenant ; but that all are one in Christ Jesus ; and that as even the Jews themselves under the law were rather servants than sons, so for the believing Gentiles, who had been made the sons of God, and who had received the Spirit of adoption, (“ God having sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father,”) to submit to circumcision and Jewish ordinances, was but to go back into a state of servitude, to forfeit their sonship, and thus to turn again to “ weak and beggarly elements ;” weak, as having no efficacy to justify ; and beggarly, as not being able to confer the spiritual riches of the Gospel. After this representation, he addresses them in a strain of expostulation, reproof, exhortation, entreaty, and tenderness, the variety and force of which are equally admirable.

A.—What is the import of his allegory respecting Isaac and Ishmael ?

B.—It affords a most appropriate illustration of his argument. For as the child of the free woman Sarah, not the child of the bond-slave Hagar, was suffered to inherit ; so he argues, that those under the bondage of Jewish rites being slaves, not sons, could have no right to the heavenly inheritance. He also intimates that the effect of the teaching of the Judaizers had been to destroy the moral purity of the Galatians, and that they had not only departed from charity, but had also fallen into many grievous sins. This leads him to exhibit a contrasted catalogue of the works of the flesh and

the fruits of the Spirit, and to warn them by the solemn address, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” He then unmasks the hypocrisy of the false teachers; whom he charges with not keeping that law for which they professed to be so zealous, and with desiring to induce the Galatians to submit to circumcision, only that they might glory in having proselyted them, and so avoid persecution from the Jews who did not profess Christianity. This they wished to make their boast: “But,” exclaims the Apostle, in one of those fine passages which the fulness of his heart so often pours forth, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;” his perfect and sufficient atonement; “by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;” so that I am not afraid of persecution for maintaining the truth, and am ready always to offer myself up for its sake.

A.—When was the Epistle to the Ephesians written?

B.—About the year 61, during St. Paul’s first imprisonment at Rome. Beside a short visit of three months which he had paid to Ephesus, he spent, as we have seen, upwards of two years in this celebrated city, where his ministry was eminently successful, and where he wrought many miracles.

A.—Where was Ephesus situated?

B.—It was the capital of Proconsular Asia, and was equally celebrated for its temple of Diana, and for the study of magic arts; for which, indeed, it had been renowned, as we know from heathen writers, for more than a century before the Gospel visited it. A popular form of incantation, used very generally, was called “the Ephesian words.”

A.—You have already mentioned the conversion of many who used unlawful arts in this city: Do you suppose that these had been impostors?

B.—Doubtless the credulity of men was great in that age, so that they might be made the ready dupes of clever pretenders; but it is by no means improbable that many of the

wonderful feats which were performed by the magicians, and which gave so much credit and influence to their pretensions, were done by the assistance of evil spirits, whose power over the heathen world, before the propagation of Christianity, was almost absolute.

A.—No faults appear to be charged upon this excellent primitive church in this Epistle.

B.—It was, like all the other first churches, composed of Jews and Gentiles, troubled by some of the former, who could not easily admit that the Gentiles stood in an equal church-relation to God with themselves. Several parts of this Epistle can only, therefore, be explained in reference to this long-agitated question.

A.—Please to point them out.

B.—The devout and elevated manner in which the Apostle acknowledges the divine mercy to them, in the first chapter, is an instance. He blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had chosen them in him before the foundation of the world, and had predestinated them to the adoption of children; having thus made known the mystery of his will, which mystery he further explains in chap. iii. 3—6
“ How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promises in Christ by the Gospel.”

A.—This subject is also perhaps referred to when the Apostle so often in this Epistle compares the church of Christ to the human body?

B.—Doubtless it is; for though to compare any society or fellowship of men to a body is a very natural and common figure of speech, yet in this argument it had a peculiar weight. Christ is the head of his body, the church; not of two bodies, Jews and Gentiles, standing in different relations to him, but of the one body, the church, composed of the believers of all

nations, and all standing in the same relation to him. Hence such passages as the following: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." "And that he might reconcile both" Jew and Gentile "unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh; for through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

A.—He has a noble figure, I also perceive, at the close of the second chapter, taken from a temple.

B.—He has; but not from the temple of Diana, as some commentators think, but from a temple which was the habitation of God, that is, the temple of Solomon. "And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom the whole building fitly framed together," on principles which make both Jew and Gentile one, "groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye," Jewish and Gentile believers, "are builded together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

A.—I thank you for this key to the meaning of this Epistle.

B.—But this will carry you but a little way into the true interpretation of the Apostle's doctrine in these statements as to the calling of the Gentiles. They were put in possession of the external privileges of the Gospel by the sending forth of the Ministers of Christ to break down the middle wall of partition, and to preach to them; but by this "calling," as the Apostle terms it, they were invited to the highest spiritual blessings; and by faith they became the partakers of them. It is not of merely outward religious advantages that the Apostle speaks; but of these as the actual instruments of a personal salvation, which God designed them by this means to receive. These blessings are exhibited in the richest phrase, and in passages of the highest eloquence, in this Epistle. They were thus "chosen in Christ," according to God's "eternal purpose," that they should be "reconciled to God," be "holy and without blame before him in love," that they should be "quickened with Christ," and made to

sit with him "in heavenly places," and be "created in Christ unto good works." This is farther illustrated by that comprehensive prayer for them, which you will find in chap. iii. 14—19, with its concluding doxology, in which all language seems to fail to express the Apostle's mighty conceptions of the value, glory, and riches of the spiritual and heavenly blessings which our calling offers to us Gentiles, as matters of personal experience.

A.—With your leave, I will read the passage: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

B.—A sense of his presence being always maintained, and his vital hallowing influence being always exerted there, through a living faith in him.

A.—"That ye, being rooted and grounded in love,"—metaphors, I suppose, taken from the growth of trees,—"may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

B.—"Here," says a pious critic, "by a bold and beautiful metaphor, the dimensions of material substances are raised above their native signification, and ennobled by being applied to the mysteries of religion; and thus St. Paul expresses the majesty, the absolute and entire perfection, and the immense charity, of the wonderful work of our redemption; the knowledge of which passeth all other knowledge, both in its own immense greatness, and the grand concern mankind has in it, and can never be so perfectly known by created understandings, as that they shall either fully comprehend, or duly value, such an adorable mystery and infinite blessing." *

A.—And the doxology to which you referred is equally elevated: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abund-

dantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

B.—And this you are always to bear in mind, that these are not merely elevated words ; that the subject is always greater than the expression, however strong it may be ; that the spiritual blessings promised us in the Gospel do, in fact, transcend all human thought, as well as human language ; and that their fulness can never be exhausted, even in eternity. Thus we may be ever asking, and ever receiving, because we ask from God, who gives without being exhausted ; we ask through Christ, whose merits claim for us a grace which the Apostle delights to represent by the terms, "riches," "unsearchable riches," "riches of his glory," &c. ; and we are under "the working of the mighty power" of his Spirit, "the power that worketh in us," enlarging the desires and the moral capacity of believers for ever to enjoy more and more of God.

A.—In chapter iv. 11, the Apostle speaks of the different orders of Ministers which Christ had appointed in his church. Some of these were, I presume, temporary ?

B.—All but the last. It was essential to an Apostle to have seen Christ, and from him to have received his commission to be a witness of his resurrection. On this ground St. Paul, you may observe, frequently defends his own apostleship : "Am not I an Apostle ? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord ?" This office, therefore, could not extend beyond the life of those who first sustained it. Prophets were also temporary Ministers. They were either persons endowed with the gift of prophecy, one of the miraculous powers of the first churches ; or more probably, like Apollos, their gift and office was to interpret the Old Testament Scriptures, chiefly with reference to the conversion of the Jews, proving from them that Jesus was the Christ. Evangelists acted as the delegates of the Apostles, and by them were vested with authority to regulate the affairs of churches, to repress disorders, and to ordain Ministers over them. As for their authority, it appears to have been derived from the Apostles,

and their office to have expired at their own death ; certain it is, that the term “ Evangelist ” does not describe a permanent order of Ministers, because the Apostles left no direction to them to ordain successors. Pastors and Teachers, that is, Pastors who teach, were the standing Ministers appointed in the church, and these are sometimes called Bishops or Overseers, sometimes Presbyters ; the same order of men being intended. As, in the larger churches, several Pastors or Presbyters were necessary, so they formed a Council, over which the Senior Presbyter, or one elected for eminence of piety or talents, presided ; and to him afterwards the term Bishop came to be exclusively applied.

A.—The Presbyters were then something like the rulers of a synagogue, and the Bishop or chief Pastor, like the chief ruler of a synagogue.

B.—This model appears to have been followed by the Apostles ; and hence, as the chief ruler of a synagogue was called also the angel of the synagogue, so the chief or presiding presbyter in the primitive churches obtained that appellation ; as, in the book of Revelation, we read, “ To the angel,” or chief Minister, “ of the church at Ephesus write.”

A.—The Epistles also relate to matters of discipline. Since this subject is connected with what is now called church order, allow me to ask what is meant by that term ?

B.—By it is meant that order and government of the church, by means of which it is trained up in knowledge and holiness, rendered “ the light of the world,” and its members made meet for heaven.

A.—What do the Apostles teach on this subject ?

B.—That God’s Ministers are his ambassadors to the world, to invite men to be reconciled to God on the terms he proposes, and to denounce the punishment which must follow their rejection ; and that they are the Pastors of his churches, to instruct them in wholesome doctrine ; to enforce upon them by counsel, exhortation, and persuasion, the laws of Christ ; to watch over them with care, lest any errors or other evils come in among them ; to comfort the tempted and feeble-minded ; to warn the unruly ; and to put away those who

dishonour the Christian profession by persevering in improper conduct. They teach also that it is the duty of all who receive Christ's doctrine, to come out from the world, and to confess Christ by uniting themselves to his church by public and avowed union with some branch of it ; to communicate at the Lord's table ; to walk by the laws of Christ in all things ; to pray for their Ministers ; to honour and uphold them in the right discharge of their office ; to observe the regular assembling of themselves together ; to cultivate brotherly love ; to be of one mind and judgment ; to avoid schisms and disputings ; to communicate to the wants of their poor brethren, and to assist zealously and with constancy in promoting the salvation of all men. On all these topics the apostolic directions are very copious and explicit.

A.—What more is there particularly noticeable in this Epistle ?

B.—It is, throughout, full of beautiful and affecting passages ; and you may remark especially those representations of the moral state of Heathens, of which the Ephesians were reminded, in order to excite their gratitude to Christ, who had rescued them from it. Here are none of those soft and palliating views of superstition and idolatry which you find in some writers. The Ephesians in their pagan state were dead in trespasses and sins, afar off, aliens, having no hope, and without God in the world. You will, no doubt, also notice his exhortations to relative duties, and the forcible manner in which he urges them ; and you can scarcely pass unnoticed his vigorous description of the Christian's warfare, and the metaphors taken from the armour of the soldiery of that time, with which the Epistle concludes. • Mark first your enemies. The grand leader of them is the devil who, like a skilful commander, has his wiles, his various stratagems and arts to overcome. Under him are ranged our other enemies ; for we “ war not against flesh and blood ;” that is, not only with flesh and blood, but “ against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

A.—What may be his meaning ?

B.—He clearly shows a subordination, order, and government among evil spirits, with which we are not made acquainted, further than by the enunciation of the fact. The terms, however, show a system of temptation organized against us by invisible and malignant powers, which we cannot resist but in that armour of God which the Apostle, therefore, so solemnly exhorts us to put on.

A.—The parts of this armour he himself explains; and the description, I perceive, is taken from the ancient military defensive and offensive weapons,—the helmet, the girdle, the breastplate, the sandal defended by iron or brass, the shield, and the sword used for close combat.

B.—And that which they represent, are truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation; or, as the Apostle elsewhere explains the helmet, “the hope of salvation;” and knowledge of the word of God, which is that sword of the Spirit, whose edge, when wielded by our Lord in his temptation, the tempter so keenly felt.

A.—In this armour the Christian must surely conquer.

B.—No, not by the armour only, but by strength from above to keep it on, and courageously to use it; and hence the Apostle adds, “Praying always with all prayer,” &c.

A.—Who were the Philippians, to whom the next Epistle is addressed?

B.—They were inhabitants of Philippi, a city of Macedonia, so called from King Philip. The Gospel was first preached there by St. Paul about the year 51. The Philippians, having heard of St. Paul’s imprisonment at Rome, sent Epaphroditus, one of their members, to convey to him the assurances of their affection, and to offer him a supply of money for his necessities; and by him this instructive Epistle was returned, about the year 61 or 62. It breathes, throughout, the spirit of true pastoral tenderness towards a very beloved church.

A.—In the first chapter I perceive, beside some very beautiful and highly spiritual petitions which he offers up for the Philippian church, the Apostle appears anxious to assure them that his imprisonment had fallen out rather for the furtherance of the Gospel.

B.—This was a consolatory topic, especially to weak believers, who might think that the imprisonment of so great an instrument of spreading and defending the Gospel might greatly check its progress. You see, however, that God can carry on his work by his servants whether at liberty or in bonds ; for the imprisonment of St. Paul, for the sake of Christ, appears to have produced religious inquiries even in the palace of Cæsar, and in all other places. Among the great, too, it is probable that several converts were made ; so that the brethren at Rome were encouraged, by the example of the Apostle, to preach the word with greater boldness themselves.

A.—Some, however, he informs us, preached Christ out of contention, and in opposition to himself.

B.—These were probably Jewish teachers, like those who distracted other churches, and who would not be well-disposed to the Apostle because of his being the champion of the equality of the Gentile believers ; a doctrine which he had largely laid down in his Epistle to the church at Rome written a few years before.

A.—His joy in the fact that Christ was preached, although the zeal of these Preachers might be much excited by a desire to turn the attention of the Christians of Rome from St. Paul's hired house to the places where they themselves addressed their congregations, and might be occasionally accompanied by animadversions upon himself, appears a noble proof of his public spirit.

B.—It is so ; and it argues no small degree of the influence of Christianity upon our minds, when we can lose all selfish considerations in the advancement of the common salvation.

A.—From some expressions which follow, it would seem that St. Paul was doubtful as to the issue of his trial before Cæsar.

B.—But he gives us an impressive example of the truly devoted Christian : He is concerned to live only to be useful ; otherwise he desires, as to all personal reasons, to depart and to be with Christ, which he knew would be far better. In all, however, he had but one end, that Christ should be magnified

in his body whether by life or by death. And how truly exempt from care and fear is that Christian who can say with him, “ For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain ! ”

A.—In the next chapter the Apostle is very urgent in his affectionate persuasives to love and unity.

B.—Nor must you overlook the prominence which he gives to humility ; a grace, the cultivation of which we are all too apt to neglect, so that sins against humility do not so deeply pierce our consciences as sins against many of the other virtues of Christianity.

A.—And yet it is said, “ God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

B.—Here, too, the Apostle connects “ strife and vain-glory ” together, and thus teaches us the source of almost all dissensions in the church ; he prescribes also the true guard against all schisms in the body of Christ.

A.—I presume you refer to his exhortation, “ In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

B.—And do you mark the great and affecting argument by which he enforces this “ lowliness of mind ” upon us ?

A.—It is taken from the humiliation of our Lord, “ who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

B.—These words also contain incidentally the most unequivocal declaration of the absolute divinity of our Saviour, so that it has been well said, they alone are sufficient for the refutation of all heresies against the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. “ It is evident,” says a learned Prelate, “ from this scripture, that Christ was as much in the form of God, as in the form of a servant, and did as really subsist in the divine nature as in the nature of man. For he was so in the form of God as thereby to be equal with God ; but no other form beside the essential, which is the divine nature itself, could infer an equality with God. There can be but one infinite, eternal, and

independent being ; and there can be no comparison between that and whatsoever is finite, temporal, and depending. He therefore who did think himself equal with God, as being in the form of God, must be conceived to subsist in that one infinite, eternal, and independent nature of God."

A.—This is most evident ; but I remark that St. Paul breaks away from the humiliation of our Lord into the most lofty description of his exaltation to the highest glory, and his universal dominion over all creatures.

B.—These rapid transitions characterize the writings of St. Paul, and form one of those peculiarities which must be kept in view by the reader, who will not so well interpret him unless he familiarize himself to his manner. When the glory of Christ's person, the greatness of his love to man, the riches of his grace, and his mediatorial exaltation, come before him, his spirit always appears to kindle with these great subjects ; and, in the powerful passages which under such emotions he writes, he lays down the most important doctrines, and presents them under views the most illustrative and striking.

A.—What is the meaning of the Apostle when he says " Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all ? " (Chap. ii. 17.)

B.—This passage is another instance that St. Paul was familiar with the prospect of martyrdom, and not only calmly contemplated, but joyfully anticipated it. The allusion which he here makes is to the Jewish sacrifices. They were prepared for the altar on which they were offered by the Levites and Priests ; this was their service ; and a libation of wine or oil was also poured upon the sacrifice. If then, says the Apostle, I can but render you Gentiles an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord, should my blood be poured out as the libation upon this sacrifice, I should rejoice to die in your service, and for the confirmation of your faith. Zeal for God, affection for them, and regard to their salvation, could not be more strongly or more elegantly expressed.

A.—The third chapter appears to be intended to warn them against those constant troublers of the primitive Gentile churches, the Jewish zealots.

B.—And the means which the Apostle adopts to prevent the Philippians from being seduced into a dependence upon the Mosaic institutions is the most convincing: He places his own example before them, as that of a man who had been most zealous for the law; who had studied Jewish literature with the utmost care; who had been of the strictest sect of adherents to the law, the Pharisees; and whose zeal for the law, and connexions in life, had opened to him the fairest prospects of honour and advantage; and yet he had counted all loss for “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,” and, so far from having repented of this after so long an experience, he still counted them but dung that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but the righteousness which was of God by faith.

A.—Then follows, I perceive, one of those allusions to the public foot-races of the Greeks, to which you have already referred.

B.—Yes; you see this great Apostle still in the full effort of his high career. “Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect,” a term used by the Greeks for the racer who had arrived at the goal; “but I follow after, that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus,” that is, that I may lay hold of my crown, of which I do not reckon myself sure until I have it in actual possession. “This one thing I do,” being intent on one thing only, “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth,” the natural action of an eager racer, who, whether on foot or in the chariot race, bends forward, “to those things which are before, I press toward the mark,” the goal, above which the judges sat, “for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

A.—What was that “care” of the Philippians for the Apostle, which he mentions in chapter iv. 10?

B.—The supply of money which they had sent to their venerated friend and father in his imprisonment; and the handsome and dignified manner in which he acknowledges the favour, is worthy your attention: “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished

again ; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want : For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : Every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." So grateful was this great man for every token of Christian affection from the churches ; and he was so truly great that he could enjoy his fulness with sanctity, and bear his wants without complaining.

CONVERSATION XXIII.

Epistles to the Colossians—Thessalonians—Timothy—Titus—Philemon—The Hebrews.

A.—Who were the Colossians?

B.—The Christians of Colosse, a city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor. The Colossians, also, like the Philippians, having heard of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, sent Epaphras thither to inform him of their affairs, and to inquire respecting his welfare. Epaphras was cast into prison at Rome, having, it is supposed, provoked the displeasure of the Government by his zeal in preaching the Gospel. The Apostle therefore sent this Epistle by Tychicus and Onesimus, about the same time as he transmitted that to the Philippians by Epaphroditus.

A.—What are the leading topics treated upon in this Epistle?

B.—It bears a great resemblance to the Epistle to the Ephesians in those parts which relate to the spiritual blessings, into the enjoyment of which Christianity introduces believers, and in those practical and relative duties which it so largely enforces ; but the doctrinal parts are dissimilar, and show that the church of Colosse, and the neighbouring church of Laodicea, to which St. Paul directs his Epistle to be sent, were exposed to danger from a variety of false doctrines.

A.—What does the Apostle mean, by “the philosophy and vain deceit,” against which the Colossians are warned ?

B.—It is not likely that the Apostle referred to one particular system or sect. That age was remarkable for an affectation of philosophic wisdom, and for eager and endless disputations on angels ; on æons, a species of imaginary superior beings, immediately emanating from God, and possessed of various powers and offices ; on the creation of the world ; on an eternal good and evil principle ; on the origin and cause

of evil ; on fate, free-will, the influence of matter on morals, and a thousand other minuter points and distinctions, to each of which was attached the greatest importance ; so that strenuous efforts were made by each teacher of philosophy to gain disciples in order to increase his own honour, and that of his sect. The Platonists of Alexandria had formed themselves into several divisions, and had mingled various Jewish opinions and traditions with their speculations ; the Hellenistic Jews had compounded a system out of the Greek and oriental philosophy, and their own cabalistic and allegorizing dreams ; and the sect of the Gnostics, so called from their affectation of superior and certain knowledge, and who had amalgamated some Christian doctrines with the impious, mystic, or ridiculous tenets they had adopted from every other quarter, were now perhaps beginning to spread their baneful influence in the churches. This show of wisdom, recommended often by logical subtlety and by a captivating eloquence, placed many of the primitive churches in danger ; and especially when popular teachers among themselves professed to exalt Christianity to the dignity, as they thought, of philosophy, and to show its agreement with the leading principles of the system adopted by the celebrated philosophers of the day. The effect as to doctrine was, that the truths of the Gospel began to be interpreted mystically, or allegorically, in order to make them accord with these wild and visionary schemes ; so that its simplicity, truth, and efficacy were at once subverted, whilst the moral effect was to occupy the attention with unprofitable and endless disputation ; to turn men from the marvellous light of the Gospel into the dark and bewildering mazes of heathen speculation on abstract subjects ; and to seduce the heart and conduct from the sanctifying control of the Gospel of Christ, leaving them to their own unchecked corruption, and to the infection of a grossly immoral state of society. Hence it is that the Apostles so constantly connect the influence both of the philosophizing and Judaizing teachers which infested the primitive churches, not only with the loss of simplicity and good temper, but with great and flagrant vices : Of this you will see many instances in the subsequent Epistles of St. Paul.

Almost all the false teachers whom St. Paul opposes, appear to have been of licentious habits ; to have endeavoured to justify a lax and unholy conduct by some perverted principle of religion ; and thus to corrupt the manners, as well as the opinions, of Christians.

A.—This contest between true Christianity, and a system corrupted and debased by this admixture of philosophy and demonology, continued, I believe, for a considerable time after the death of the Apostles ?

B.—But the principles laid down in the apostolical Epistles, laid a firm ground from which the champions of truth among the early fathers assailed the various heresies of this kind which from time to time appeared ; and with such success, that the most popular systems, known afterwards under the general name of Gnosticism, and which were springing up in the time of the Apostles, came at length to be so greatly forgotten, that it has required much investigation on the part of the learned to obtain from various scattered sources any tolerable account of the leading opinions which distinguished the various philosophic sects, whose teachers troubled the early churches. Errors of another kind were, indeed, introduced, which afterwards led to apostasy ; but the great principles which had been brought directly out of the Greek and oriental philosophy, such as the eternity of matter ; the impossibility of a creation out of nothing ; the necessary power of sin in souls whilst united to matter ; the forming of the material world by an evil deity ; the necessary and eternal opposition between Christ the restorer, and the subordinate malignant deity who had formed the world ; the existence of the body of Christ in appearance only, because they could not conceive that he would ally himself to a material body ; and the denial of a literal resurrection of the body, arising from the notion of the inherent evil in all matter ;—these, and some others, were at length banished from the church. They did not first arise out of the church, you are to observe ; for they existed long before in various forms ; but for a considerable time they troubled it, and created schisms. The stand which Christianity made against these principles, false in philosophy, and

most pernicious in their influence upon morals, there is no doubt, laid the foundation of that better philosophy for which later times have been celebrated; and by its steady support of a few great first principles as to the divine nature, the creation out of nothing, the unity and supremacy of the God-head, the passive nature of matter, &c., it at once rescued man's intellect from the dominion of a wild imagination, and placed morals on the ground of obligation and responsibility.

A.—There is probably some allusion to the Gnostic errors in the first chapter of this Epistle, where Christ is said to have created the angels.

B.—This philosophy abounded in wild imaginings as to angels and other beings superior to them, some of whom were supposed to have emanated from God countless ages before time began; and there is reason to believe, that, in the attempts made to accommodate Christianity to it, our Lord had been assumed to be one, perhaps the first, of these emanations. The Apostle, therefore, for ever fenced Christianity against this insidious offer of compromise between it and the philosophy of the world, by asserting, not only that Christ created all things, but that in this he included things in heaven, as well as things in earth; all invisible things, as well as visible; all real existences, however high, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, in which terms he includes all the orders of superior intelligences. He states further, that he is before all things, and that by him all things consist; that is, they have a being wholly dependent upon him. The philosophers offered to exalt Christ into the first rank of many glorious beings who in eternity emanated from the Father. But St. Paul indignantly spurns the overture, and asserts that Christ is the eternal Son; and that so far from any other being emanating from the Father, not one of them was so produced; but that they came into being in the mode of creation, and that not only by the Son, but for him, to be his subjects and servants.

A.—No words could place this fundamental and all-important doctrine in a stronger light. But in chapter ii. he appears to guard them against the Jewish teachers.

B.—These might be philosophizing teachers also ; for the Jews, I have said, were in that day greatly infected with this kind of philosophy, which they studied in the Greek cities ; and yet were often furiously zealous for the forms of the ceremonial law. They wished to seduce the Gentile Christians to the observance of Jewish Sabbaths, holidays, and new moons, and to submit to that great sign of proselytism, circumcision. But the Apostle dissipates the whole by declaring that believers were complete in Christ, and needed nothing for edification or salvation, but faith in him, the gift of his Spirit, and obedience to his laws. For the same reason he cautions them against worshipping angels, which the Jews of that corrupt age practised and taught ; a practice which he denounces as a renunciation of Christ as the Head ; to whom, therefore, all honour and worship must be paid, and on whom exclusively all trust ought to rest.

A.—Does not this prohibition lie as forcibly against the Popish worship of angels ?

B.—Most undoubtedly ; and when the Apostle guards the Colossians against being beguiled into this practice by a voluntary humility, because those ancient deceivers pretended that we were not worthy to draw near to God, through Christ, without first applying ourselves to angels ; he exposes the hollowness of the same pretext which the Church of Rome, to this day, sets up for its worship of saints and angels, in order to gain them over to become mediators for the guilty : “ There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.”

A.—The remainder of the Epistle contains exhortations to various duties.

B.—And I would advise you to commit the third chapter to memory, that its important directions may never be absent from your mind. With this view many of the practical parts of St. Paul’s Epistles might also most profitably be got off by heart by young persons ; but this chapter has a peculiar variety in its beautiful and heavenly exhortations. Spiritual mindedness, the mortification of the sinful appetites of the body, the laying aside of anger, malice, blasphemy, that is,

censorious speaking, impure conversation, and lying, the cultivation of meekness, humbleness of mind, forbearance, and other benevolent affections, storing the mind richly with the word of God, singing his high praises in social companies, doing all things to the glory of God, and various relative duties, are the subjects of apostolic exhortation in this instructive chapter, and are at once expressed with the most attractive simplicity, and enforced by the most persuasive and commanding motives. Read these divine counsels, my dear young friend, with greater attention than ever; and make it the subject of your earnest and constant prayers, that you may have grace fully to order your principles, your temper, and your conduct by them.

A.—The next Epistle is addressed to the Thessalonians. We have an account of the introduction of the Gospel into that city, which was, I believe, at that time the capital of Macedonia, in Acts xvii. 1—9; and of St. Paul's expulsion by the tumult excited by the unbelieving Jews. When was this Epistle written?

B.—From Thessalonica St. Paul went to Berea, and from thence to Athens. From Athens he sent Timothy to Thessalonica, to confirm the new converts. Upon Timothy's rejoining St. Paul, some time afterward, at Corinth, it is supposed that the Apostle wrote this Epistle, grounded upon the favourable and, to St. Paul, the very joyful report which Timothy had made of their spirituality and steadfastness. This is supposed to have been the first written of St. Paul's Epistles, and to bear date about A. D. 48.

A.—It does not appear to have any references to the questions raised in other churches by Judaizing teachers.

B.—The reason probably is, that this church was composed almost exclusively of Gentile converts.

A.—What are its particular characters?

B.—The First Epistle to the Thessalonians is written in a strain of great commendation, earnestness, and affection; and has a striking passage on the general resurrection, which communicates some deeply interesting particulars as to that event. Christians are forbidden to indulge in that excessive lamenta-

tion for the dead which characterized the Gentiles, who sorrowed as men who had no hope ; and in order to console them under the death of their friends, the Thessalonians are assured that “them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,” at his second coming. He then reveals to them and to the church the following particulars :—That the saints who are alive when Christ shall come, shall not be changed as to their bodies and glorified before those who have died in the Lord shall rise from the grave. They shall not prevent, or go before, them that sleep ; but “the dead in Christ shall rise first ;” that is, before the living saints shall be transformed and ascend to meet him ; so that the whole church shall be glorified at once : “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and so shall be for ever with the Lord.” The whole scene, as here represented, is wonderfully impressive. The Lord himself descends from heaven with a shout, the shout of the thousand times ten thousand who attend his glorious second advent, and usher it in by their acclamations ; and with the voice of the archangel, some particular and exalted angel, excelling all the rest in elevation of nature and office, and acting as the leader and marshal of the ministering host ; and with the trump of God ; that very sound which struck so much dread into the Israelites, when the law was given ; so that they said, “Let not God speak to us any more, lest we die.” What a scene to be disclosed in an instant to the wicked ! What sounds to burst at once upon them in the midst of their business and pleasures ! “They shall wail,” says another Apostle, “because of him.” Not so the saints who are alive at his coming. They assure their hearts before him, and wait the issue. The dead in Christ then rise ; in the same moment the yet mortal living are changed ; and the whole redeemed host, invested with glory and immortality, ascend to meet the Lord in the air, and so, after their public justification, and the condemnation of the wicked, shall be for ever with the Lord.

A.—This grand event, which shall close the history of our world, ought surely never to be absent from our thoughts.

B.—And let us never forget that the only true work of our

life is, to give “all diligence that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.” Found by Christ we must be: Let us watch and pray always, that we may be “found *in* him.”

A.—What is there remarkable in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians?

B.—From what the Apostle had said in his First Epistle, on the final judgment, they had erroneously concluded that the day of Christ was very near, even at hand; and the correction of this misconception leads the Apostle to pronounce a most distinct and important prophecy respecting a grand apostasy in the church, and the rise, reign, and ultimate destruction of the man of sin; all which events, he informs them, must take place before the end of time and the coming of Christ to judgment.

A.—Thus in St. Paul the spirit of prophecy was added to his other spiritual gifts.

B.—And his apostolic office and inspiration have been confirmed to all ages, by the accomplishment of the prophetic part of his writings.

A.—What power is represented by “the man of sin, the son of perdition,” mentioned chapter ii. 3?

B.—“The falling away,” or apostasy, spoken of immediately before, shows that this power was not either heathen or Mohammedan. Only the church can fall away from previous faith and purity; and this apostasy must also be principally charged upon the Church of Rome, because, although other churches have also departed from the faith, yet we do not see their apostasy systematized, and gathered up under one head, here called “the man of sin.” No other church, however fallen, except the Church of Rome, can therefore answer to this description.

A.—This is a remarkable difference; but in what does the apostasy of the Church of Rome consist?

B.—In substituting other mediators, beside the one Mediator, Jesus Christ; in worshipping images; invoking saints and angels; offering prayers and praises to the Virgin Mary, and advancing her into a kind of deity; teaching the merit

of works ; assuming the power to forgive sins ; inventing, or at least adopting from Paganism, the unscriptural and corrupting doctrine of purgatory ; rendering the Lord's supper an idolatrous rite, by worshipping the host ; giving to her traditions an authority equal to the word of God ; keeping that word from the people ; and crowning all these, and other fundamental subversions of pure Christianity, by inculcating hatred, rancour, and violence, against all other churches, in contempt of that charity without which no man can be a disciple of Christ.

A.—Then “ the man of sin ” is the Pope.

B.—Not this or that particular Pope, but the Pope in general, as the head and chief of this apostasy.

A.—Why is he called “ the man of sin,” and “ the son of perdition ?”

B.—“ Not only on account of the scandalous lives of many Popes, but by reason of their more scandalous doctrines and principles ; dispensing with the most necessary duties, and granting, or rather selling, pardons and indulgences to the most abominable crimes. Or, if by sin be meant idolatry in particular, as it is frequently called in the Old Testament, the more emphatically to mark its immoral tendencies, it is evident that the Pope has corrupted the worship of God, and perverted it from spirit and truth to superstition and idolatry of the grossest kind. He is also, like the false Apostle Judas, called ‘ the son of perdition ; ’ whether actively, as being the cause of destruction to others, or passively, as being devoted to destruction himself.”*

A.—I have turned to the chapter, and find in the fourth verse characters so remarkable applied to this “ man of sin,” that, if they are found in the Popes, they must certainly be intended in the prophecy.

B.—These are, that he “ opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God ; ” that is, above Emperors and Kings, called gods among the Gentiles ; “ or that is worshipped ; ” that is, receives the highest reverence among men ; and that “ he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing him-

* Bishop Newton.

self that he is God ; " ostentatiously claiming supremacy over all the powers of the earth. This is a true picture of the arrogance of the Popedom. " The man of sin " is an opposer, an adversary, excommunicating, anathematizing, persecuting, and destroying ; drenched with the blood of saints, and of the wars produced by his ambitious policy. He has exalted himself above all Emperors, Kings, and Princes deposing some, advancing others ; obliging them to prostrate themselves before him, to kiss his toe, and often to submit to other and more humbling acknowledgments of inferiority. Nay, he has exalted himself above the true God himself ; setting aside what his word enjoins, and enjoining what it forbids ; and so, even whilst calling himself the Vicar of Christ, utterly displacing and usurping his authority in his church ; and is, therefore, more properly than any other power, called Antichrist.

A.—Perhaps his sitting " in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," may refer to the pomp of his inauguration, of which I have read : For he then sits upon the high altar of St. Peter's at Rome, and receives adoration from the assembled multitude.

B.—Thus every Pope at his installation fulfils this prophecy, and applies it to himself before all the world. But he has also assumed divine attributes and titles ; as holiness and infallibility, and the power of forgiving sins ; and has been styled, and allowed himself to be styled, " Our Lord God the Pope, a God upon earth, King of kings, and Lord of lords :" And these blasphemies have not been merely the uncensured extravagancies of private writers, but the language of public decretals and acts of Council.

A.—The picture is, indeed, most accurate.

B.—But the Apostle, you will observe, adds other notices of " the man of sin ; " as " signs, lying wonders," or false miracles, " all deceivableness of unrighteousness," and a widely prevailing delusion, owing to God having given up an unfaithful and corrupt church in his wrath, " because they received not the love of the truth."

A.—And all this appears to have been remarkably fulfilled in the monstrous and wicked impositions which the Popish

priesthood have ever practised upon the credulity of the ignorant, and in that infatuated spirit of idolatry and superstition which formerly spread through the greater part of the world, and which still renders millions of persons in Europe, Asia, and America, wholly blind to the truth and excellency of the Scriptures.

B.—Yes ; and it very much resembles that passion for pagan superstition and idolatry which marked the early periods of the world.

A.—It is a great satisfaction, however, to see this dark empire of error, sin, and persecution, weakened and approaching its fall.

B.—And this has been effected, as stated by the Apostle, by the brightness of our Lord's coming, and by the spirit of his mouth, which is the pure word of God. By the preaching of its truths, and the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongues of different nations, the glorious Reformation was rendered successful ; and by the same means will the final victory of the church over Antichrist be effected.

A.—The Epistles of Paul next following are addressed to individuals : Two were written to Timothy.

B.—This eminent Evangelist was, from a youth, greatly beloved by St. Paul ; and he stands in the sacred page as an interesting example to the young. His father was a Greek of Lystra, but his mother a Jewess, by whom he was early instructed in the Scriptures. Himself, his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois, all appear to have been the fruits of St. Paul's ministry, on his first visit to Lycaonia. When St. Paul was on his second great evangelical tour, he took Timothy along with him from Lystra ; where, young as he was, he had made himself eminent in the church by his zeal and piety. He was afterwards ordained to the ministry by the laying on of the hands of St. Paul and those of the Presbyters ; after which he was often deputed by St. Paul, and invested with his authority, to regulate the affairs of several of the churches. For this ministry he receives, in these Epistles, very solemn and important advices. He finally suffered martyrdom at Ephesus.

A.—When was the First Epistle written?

B.—The most probable opinion appears to be, that it was written soon after St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome.

A.—It contains many affectionate cautions against the philosophic and Judaizing disputings of which you have spoken.

B.—And the severe and highly descriptive manner in which the Apostle speaks of them, is worthy of remark. He characterizes them as “fables,” “endless genealogies,” “questions and strifes of words;” and he as strongly marks their moral influence, when he calls the disputants “proud, though knowing nothing,” and their disputings “perverse,” “whereof cometh envy, strife, railing,” &c. Although these particular errors, arising out of a speculative philosophy, have disappeared, yet are the censures still of great use in showing the evil of the principles from which they proceeded; for such principles will, in every age, produce errors, of some kind or other, fatal to truth and piety. “They may teach us,” says one, “to mistrust the wisdom of man, when it is not enlightened and sanctified from above; that the human mind may build up systems, and may wander up and down through the regions of theory; but that truth is seated in the throne of God; and that he alone can arrive at truth who, at the foot of that throne, lays his hopes, his wishes, and his reason. The Second Epistle to Timothy was written during St. Paul's second imprisonment at Rome, and not long before his martyrdom. It is marked by the strongest affection, and, like the former Epistle, abounds in ministerial directions and solemn charges. It is rendered peculiarly interesting, as containing what may be considered as the Apostle's dying testimony; and shows that, when he most needed the supports of his faith, they did not fail him. He died as he lived, full of the hopes and assurances of a blissful immortality: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all those who love his appearing.” So

died the greatest and most useful mere man that perhaps ever lived.

A.—The language of this interesting passage is taken, I perceive, from the Grecian games.

B.—In part. The first metaphor is taken from warfare in general ; he had been a faithful and courageous soldier of Christ. The second is taken from the public races ; he had completed his course of strenuous effort. The third is taken from the fidelity of servants in keeping the property entrusted to them ; for thus St. Paul had preserved the great deposit of the Christian faith committed to him as an Apostle. The agonistic allusion is then again resumed, and, in reference to the judge of the Grecian games, who dispensed the crowns to the conquerors, the Lord is called “the righteous Judge,” from whom he confidently looked, not for the perishable Olympic wreath, but for that crown of glory which fadeth not away.

A.—The Epistle to Titus appears similar in its design to those to Timothy.

B.—Titus was a Greek, sometimes a companion of St. Paul, and occasionally, like Timothy, deputed as an Evangelist, with authority from the Apostle to order the affairs of the churches, by appointing Ministers, and correcting their abuses. The principal design of this Epistle is to give Titus directions for the management of his important office among the churches raised up in Crete. All the three preceding Epistles are of the first moment to the church, as they exhibit to Christian Ministers the most perfect idea of the duties of their function ; teach the manner in which these duties should be performed ; describe the qualifications necessary in those who are to be entrusted with those holy offices ; and exhibit to the people those ends for which the ministry is instituted, and the powers with which Christ has invested his servants, to banish strange doctrines, to reprove, and ultimately to put away, offenders against the church’s peace and purity, and to maintain the laws and ordinances of Christ.

A.—Who was Philemon, to whom St. Paul addresses a short Epistle ?

B.—A convert of St. Paul's, residing in Colosse. The occasion of writing to him was the sending back a slave who had absconded from his master Philemon, and fled to Rome, and was there converted by the preaching of the Apostle. He asks for him his master's pardon, and generously promises to pay the value of any thing of which Onesimus had wronged him. It is an important Epistle, as showing that although Christianity did not violently interfere with the civil condition of men, it commenced an ameliorating process favourable to all the oppressed. There is nothing in it, surely, which can be interpreted to favour the practice of slavery among Christians! St. Paul requests Philemon to receive the fugitive, no longer "as a slave, but as a brother beloved in the Lord." This Epistle has always been admired for the delicacy and address with which it is written; and it places in a most interesting view the amiable and benevolent character of this great Apostle.

A.—To whom was the Epistle to the Hebrews addressed?

B.—To the Christians of Judea, who were called Hebrews, in distinction from the Jews born in Greek or other foreign cities. The latter were called Hellenists or Grecians, because, for the most part, they used the Greek language.

A.—What was the design of this Epistle?

B.—It is one of St. Paul's great doctrinal Epistles, in which he proves, in order to establish the believing Hebrews in the faith, that the Gospel is not only superior to the Mosaic institutions; but that the latter were strikingly and designedly typical of it. Into this subject, a point which had been only incidentally mentioned in other Epistles, he now enters very largely; as writing to the believing Jews of Palestine.

A.—Then, as in the Epistle to the Romans, he speaks chiefly of the moral law, so in this he dwells upon the ceremonial law.

B.—And for this reason, that his design in writing to the Romans was to establish the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; but here his principal purpose was to prove that Christianity was a perfect dispensation of the covenant of grace, appointed to supersede the shadowy and prefigurative dispensa-

tion of Moses ; and that their trust for salvation ought therefore to be steadfastly placed in Christ alone.

A.—The believing Hebrews appear to have been at that period much persecuted by their Jewish brethren.

B.—And for that reason they were in greater danger of being led into apostasy, of the consequences of which the Apostle draws the most fearful picture.

A.—This Epistle shows St. Paul's great concern for the believers of his own nation.

B.—So that the calumny with which he was persecuted through life, of so devoting himself to the conversion of the Gentiles as to be indifferent or hostile to the Jews, is proved to be unfounded. His strong feelings for their welfare, expressed in the Epistle to the Romans, his writing this Epistle to them just after his first imprisonment at Rome, and his subsequent visit to Judea for their spiritual advantage, show the deep interest which he took in their salvation.

A.—What is the general argument of this Epistle ?

B.—The general argument is, that as the Mosaic institution was a preparatory type, and the Christian dispensation its anti-type, the latter was superior to the former, as the substance to the shadow. But this general argument has several highly interesting branches.

A.—One of these is, I presume, contained in the first chapter ?

B.—It is ; and it rests on this, that Christ is the Son ; which shows that the Gospel was spoken to us by the immediate agency of a being whose nature was not only above that of the Prophets, but that of the angels, by whose ministry the law was given ; and that, consequently, he was divine. From the superior and divine dignity of Christ, who was the visible Teacher of the Gospel, St. Paul argues its superior perfection. He supports this argument, too, from passages in the Old Testament, which show that the Messiah was there spoken of as the Son of God ; an appellation which, with the Prophets, was manifestly used to express his divinity, because they invest him with the attributes of God, and ascribe the creation, the upholding, and the final destruction of the visible universe to

him. The Apostle's argument, therefore, may be thus drawn out: If Jesus is, as you believe, the Messias, then he is the Son of God, for your own Scriptures so designate Messias; if the Son, then is he divine; if divine, his nature is infinitely higher than that of the Prophets, and that of the angels, by whose ministry you boast that the law was given; and if God "in these last days hath spoken to us by his Son," then the superior dignity of the messenger shows the superior glory and grace of the message.

A.—And from these premises, I perceive, he draws a most solemn practical conclusion in chapter ii. 1—4, as to the impossibility of our escaping punishment, "if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord," &c.

B.—A conclusion, indeed, which ought to fill us with holy fear.

A.—What does the Apostle mean by verse 5, of this chapter, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak?"

B.—"The world to come," was a phrase in use among the Jews to express the kingdom of Messiah. But the affairs of the Christian dispensation are not administered by angels, whose frequent appearances and interposition the Jews thought did so much honour to the law; they are administered by one who, according to a passage in the eighth Psalm, was indeed made "lower than the angels," or, "for a little while lower than the angels," as it is read in the margin, but is now "crowned with glory and honour;" all things, even the highest angels, being made subject to him.

A.—Why, in pursuing this argument, does the Apostle dwell so forcibly upon the incarnation and sufferings of Christ?

B.—To show that the lowly state and humiliating sufferings which our Lord endured, subjects at which the Jews greatly stumbled, were necessary to be undergone by the Messias, in order to qualify him for those offices of glory and grace by which the administration of the new dispensation was raised above every thing which gave honour to the law. As the Captain of our salvation, the great Leader of his elect host to

glory, he was “made perfect,” fully qualified for his saving offices, “through sufferings ;” by a sacrificial “death, he overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage ;” and by being made “like unto his brethren,” in their humble and suffering condition, he became “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

A.—And thus, great and consolatory general truths are brought out of this particular question with the Jews.

B.—Which forms one of the striking excellencies of St. Paul’s writings, and was, no doubt, so overruled by the Spirit of inspiration, that every part of the sacred word might be applicable to all ages, and to all people.

A.—The force of the argument in the commencement of chapter iii. appears still to rest upon the Sonship of Christ.

B.—Yes, Moses as a servant, and Christ as a Son, are placed in contrast ; and here also, the divinity of the Son, as such, again breaks forth ; this Son was the Creator of the whole house, or Jewish family, over which Moses presided. “ For every house is builded by some one ; but he that built all things is God.”

A.—How does the Apostle proceed ?

B.—After warning the Hebrews lest they should imitate the unbelief and apostasies of their fathers in the wilderness, and come short of the heavenly rest, of which the rest of Canaan was but the type, he proceeds to show, that the priesthood of Christ was superior to the Levitical priesthood, because, according to the divine prediction, it was conformed to a different and a higher order, even that of Melchisedec.

A.—This was that mystical royal Priest of Canaan to whom Abraham paid both homage and tithes.

B.—And the Apostle therefore uses this as his proof that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to that of Aaron, who paid tithes to him in his progenitor. Abraham, too, was

blessed by him ; “ and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater.” Thus you see the conclusion to which St. Paul leads us. If the priesthood of Aaron was inferior to that of Melchisedec, and Christ’s priesthood was to be of the order of Melchisedec, and yet the superior order of Melchisedec was itself but a faint shadow or type of that of “ the High Priest of our profession ;” then is the priesthood of Christ exalted inconceivably above that of Aaron.

A.—Now I perceive the force of his argument ; but what conformity is there between the priesthood of Christ, and that of Melchisedec ?

B.—Our Lord, like him, unites the offices of King and Priest, which Aaron did not ; he is in a far more perfect sense than any man could be, however holy, “ King of righteousness, and Prince of peace ;” and his priesthood is not hereditary, was not received from others who went before, nor will it ever be transmitted to successors. Thus it was like that of Melchisedec, who is said to have been “ without father or mother,” “ without beginning of days, or end of life,” as recorded in Scripture. For who his predecessors were, when he entered upon his office, and when he was removed from it by death, are circumstances purposely left out of the account given of him in the Old Testament, that he might be the type of Him whose priesthood was peculiar and personal, and who was “ to abide a Priest for ever.”

A.—Now I think I understand the meaning of what is said of Melchisedec, which used formerly to be very mysterious to me.

B.—The Apostle adds other marks of the superiority of our Lord’s priesthood : As that he was made a High Priest by the solemn oath of God ; that he ministers in the heavenly places, of which the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon were but shadows ; that he was without sin ; that he offered his own blood, of the virtue of which, the blood of the ancient sacrifices, of themselves of no efficacy with respect to the conscience, was but the typical representation ; that his oblation, such is its perfection, never need to be repeated like the Levitical sacrifices ; that it cleanses the conscience from dead

works ; and has obtained eternal redemption for us. These and other topics, connected with the superiority of Christ's atonement and intercession, are dwelt upon at large, and placed in the most convincing and instructive views.

A.—I am, then, to conclude that the Apostle, in this Epistle, proves that Christ is superior to angels in nature ; superior to Moses in authority ; and superior to Aaron in the order of his priesthood, in the efficacy of his sacrifice, in his ministering in holy places not made with hands, and in the duration, prevalence, and universality of his intercession.

B.—You have rightly traced the outline of the argument which the Apostle fills up with so much elegance and force ; and the manner in which he applies these truths to the practical ends which he proposed in writing, is most worthy your consideration.

A.—He appeals, in several passages, to the fears of the Hebrews.

B.—And justly so ; for the apostasy of a Jew, and especially of a Jew then living in Palestine, had a peculiar aggravation.

A.—How so ?

B.—Because most of them had been the witnesses of the miracles of our Lord, or of those wrought by the Apostles in confirmation of the Gospel ; and as none of them who renounced Christianity could be again admitted into the synagogues without blaspheming Christ ; and probably not without concurring in that particular blasphemy invented by the Pharisees, that our Lord and his Apostles wrought miracles by the influence of evil spirits ; they made themselves partakers of that sin against the Holy Ghost which put them out of the reach of salvation.

A.—By this circumstance, then, you would perhaps have me explain those terrible passages in this Epistle which relate to the apostasy of believing Hebrews.

B.—As, for instance, that in chapter vi. 4—8 : “ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers

of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance," &c. The common people might possibly be seduced to receive the blasphemy of the Pharisees as accounting for the miracles of Christ, because of the great authority which the Doctors of their law had over them ; but the Pharisees themselves, in this respect, sinned wilfully ; and all who had been enlightened by the Gospel, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, having been once convinced of the folly and fallacy of this wretched theory, could not again adopt the blasphemy but against their own convictions ; and so, like the Pharisees, they sinned wilfully, and fell into the same condemnation.

A.—This will well explain chapter x. 26 : " For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," &c.

B.—Certainly the particular sin there spoken of is apostasy, with all the aggravating circumstances which attended it in the case of those to whom the Apostle wrote.

A.—What connexion have the instances of faith in the Elders of the Jewish Church, as stated in chapter xi., with the Apostle's argument ?

B.—He there shows that all the eminent saints of old, although they were often exposed to great difficulties, and severe trials, were distinguished for the constancy of their faith, which was rewarded accordingly ; and thus he exhorts the Hebrews to hold fast their confidence in Christ, and assures them, also, of a great recompence of reward. He exhibits these instances as so many animating examples to the believers of that and every subsequent age, and thus applies the moral of the whole : " Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus," &c. (Chap. xii. 1.)

A.—You regard this as a very important Epistle ?

B.—One of the most important of all the Pauline Epistles ; both as it fully states the doctrine of the atonement, and as it affords a key to the interpretation of the types of the Old

Testament. It throws a stream of evangelical light upon many texts in the writings of Moses, and upon many parts of the ceremonial law, which would otherwise have been little understood.

A.—It appears, also, to contain many very beautiful passages in point of composition.

B.—In this respect, you may call it one of the most finished productions of St. Paul's pen; always remembering, when we speak in this manner, that, although the genius of each sacred writer is seen in his writings, that genius was not only controlled, but heightened, by inspiration; and that, in a vast number of instances the thoughts could only have been communicated by the divine Spirit, who searches the deep things of God. Wonderfully felicitous in expression, for instance, is that declaration of the essential glory of Christ in chapter i. 3: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." But the words are not only striking and beautiful, but declaratory of a great theological doctrine which the Holy Spirit only could have revealed. The former of these characters, "the brightness of his glory," is drawn from a luminous body; and when the Father is compared to the original fountain of light, and the Son to the effulgence or ray streaming from it, we are taught that the essence of both is the same; that the one is inseparable from, and is not to be conceived without, the other; and, consequently, that neither of them ever was, or could be, alone. Thus the Son is hereby declared to be of the same nature and eternity with the Father; and from hence, more particularly, the Nicene Creed has drawn its clauses, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made."

A.—What is the import of the other part of the description, "the express image of his person?"

B.—The image is the character impressed by a seal; and thus we are taught that all that is in the Father is in the Son; in other words, that all the perfections of the one are the perfections of the other, and answer to each other both in kind and degree, as the impression upon wax answers to the

engraving on the seal by which it is made. To this passage, I may add that in the fourth chapter, which speaks of the Word of God.

A.—Is not that a personification of the word spoken or preached?

B.—Rather it is Christ, the personal Word; and to him omniscience is not only attributed, but that attribute is described, so to speak, in the most piercing manner. “For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

A.—This language appears singular.

B.—It is a powerful metaphor taken from the operations of the Priest, who, in dissecting the sacrifices, separated those parts which were the most secret, and most closely joined together, examining them with the utmost care, lest there should be any unsoundness, which would have vitiated the whole offering.

A.—I see the force of the allusion, and feel its application: It suggests the words of David, “Behold, thou requirest truth in the inward parts.”

B.—The passage in the twelfth chapter may also be particularly noticed. In this, St. Paul compares the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, the former to Mount Sinai, the latter to Mount Zion. This allegory is not only of a highly sublime character, but it instructs us, also, in the typical designation of those celebrated mountains. The law was given from Sinai; but the temple was built upon Zion, and was the place where God, through successive ages, was approached through sacrifice, and from which he gave his blessing to his people. The Jews, who, disregarding the Gospel, depended for justification upon their own law, are therefore said to “come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,” &c.; whilst the

true believer, flying from all these terrors to the refuge of Christ's atonement, comes to "Mount Zion," the peaceful residence of God's mercy, "and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

A.—"The general assembly" is here mentioned, I presume, in allusion to the assembling of the tribes at the annual feasts at Jerusalem: But what may be meant by "the church of the first-born?"

B.—Under the law, the first-born were to be "sanctified" to the Lord, and Moses was commanded to register the "number of their names." Thus are we taught that the members of Christ's true church are all sanctified to God, and that none but such are "written," or enrolled, "in heaven."

A.—Does the Apostle confine this fine description of God's spiritual church to the true and visible church on earth?

B.—Certainly not; the family of heaven and earth are one. They form one society under one head: We are joined to this society in spirit now; but hereafter we shall, if "faithful unto death," be present with it personally and visibly for ever.

A.—Which of the two Apostles called James was the author of the Epistle?

B.—It is most probably ascribed to James the Less, the son of Alpheus, who presided over the church at Jerusalem. He was a very holy man, and on that account was surnamed "the Just;" and was put to death in a tumult of the Jews, A. D. 62.

A.—Why is it inscribed "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad?"

B.—Because it was designed particularly for the use of the Jews; and as many of the ten tribes returned with those of Judah and Benjamin, after the termination of seventy years' captivity in Babylon; and many others of them mingled also with those who were resident, as we before observed, in the

cities colonized by the Greeks under Alexander and his successors, and in other places ; the Jews of that age were often designated as the twelve tribes.

A.—What is the leading object of this Epistle ?

B.—To enforce Christian practice against a corruption of the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

A.—How are St. James and St. Paul to be reconciled on this point ?

B.—Very easily ; for St. Paul teaches justification by a true and living faith ; which St. James no where denies. He denies only that a man can be saved by a dead or inoperative faith.

A.—But St. Paul says, that Abraham was “justified by faith ;” and I see that St. James says he was “justified by works.”

B.—But you will observe that Abraham’s justification of which St. Paul speaks was before the birth of Isaac ; that of which St. James speaks when he offered Isaac on the altar. And you will also remark that at the former time St. James himself allows that Abraham was justified by faith ; and urges his subsequent obedience to prove that he was so : “And the Scripture was fulfilled,” or established, “which says, Abraham,” many years before this, “believed in God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.” So that St. Paul affirms that Abraham was justified before God by faith ; St. James, that he was justified, or proved before men to have been, at the time St. Paul refers to, justified by a faith which led to subsequent obedience. Thus they entirely agree.

A.—This is now clear, and I thank you for the explanation.

B.—In reading this Epistle, you will observe that there is a great depth of heavenly wisdom expressed in a concise, sententious, and somewhat proverbial manner ; so that the sentiments of the Apostle are well adapted to fix themselves in the memory. There are also some passages of great beauty and elegance.

A.—The whole of the first chapter appears singularly beautiful.

B.—It is a collection of most important sentiments exqui-

sitely expressed ; and St. James's description of "the wisdom from above," chap. iii. 17, is equal to St. Paul's description of charity, before pointed out, although more concise. "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Thus as St. Paul shows the vanity of knowledge without charity, St. James exhibits its value when united with it, and teaches us that true wisdom and true charity form the perfect Christian.

A.—St. James deals much in reproof.

B.—And yet they are the reproofs of kindness ; and you cannot think of him but under the character of a mild and paternal Apostle, whose fidelity was nevertheless inflexible.

A.—The latter part of the Epistle draws a sad picture of the moral state of the Jews.

B.—It marks a people ripening for destruction ; and for this reason the Apostle so earnestly guards the believing Jews against the pernicious example of their brethren after the flesh, among whom they dwelt. Through these he utters his solemn reproofs and warnings to the impenitent of all ages. Pride, oppression, and carnality were become the leading characters of a people, professing to know God, and in works denying him ; and the immoral habits of this unbelieving people in that day sufficiently account for their stubborn resistance to all the evidence of the truth of the Gospel, which they hated for its purity.

CONVERSATION XXIV.

Epistles of Peter, John, Jude—The Revelation to St. John.

A.—THE First Epistle of Peter is addressed to “ the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia :” Who were they ?

B.—They were not Gentile Christians, because such could not be denominated “ strangers.” They must, therefore, have been Jewish Christians scattered over those extensive regions ; which affords another proof of the wide diffusion of Christianity at that early period.

A.—The Apostle, in the conclusion of his Epistle, says, “ The church at Babylon saluteth you :” Was this Epistle then written from Babylon ?

B.—The Jews were in the habit of giving mystic appellations to cities and nations in their captivities and dispersions. It was customary with them, for instance, to call their heathen enemies by the name of Edom ; and as Rome was the great oppressor of the nations in that day, as Babylon had been formerly, that appellation was given by them to the metropolis of the Caesars. For this reason, many of the learned are of opinion, that this Epistle was written from Rome.

A.—What was its design ?

B.—To exhort these dispersed Jewish Christians to practical holiness, to a quiet and blameless life, to patience under persecutions, and to various other virtues ; all which subjects are treated with a natural eloquence, a heavenly wisdom, and a mild and persuasive spirit. Peter’s Second Epistle was also written to the same persons, and he urges the same exhortations with the authority of a father in Christ, standing on the brink of eternity, and giving his last testimony to the truth and excellency of the religion of which he had been so long an Apostle. In the latter part of this Epistle, he guards them against the bad principles and unholy practices of the false

teachers and their disciples, who now began still more numerously to abound ; and enforces his exhortations by a solemn admonition drawn from the final judgment.

A.—These Epistles always appear to me to have a peculiar persuasiveness and power.

B.—Your judgment of them is correct. Both Epistles have called forth the admiration of the great critics Erasmus and Scaliger. Ostervald says, that the First Epistle is one of the finest books in the New Testament ; that the Second is written with great strength and majesty ; and that both give the strongest internal proof of their divine origin.

A.—Why does St. Peter, in both Epistles, particularly enjoin obedience to Governors ?

B.—Because the Jews were a restless and factious people ; and contended that they were not under any obligation to obey any heathen Magistrates. Christians are therefore taught to submit themselves “ to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake : Whether it be to the King, as supreme ; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.”

A.—As the name of the Apostle John does not occur in his First Epistle, how does it appear that it was written by him ?

B.—From the testimony of the earliest antiquity, which is confirmed by internal evidence, the style having all the peculiarities of St. John’s Gospel. This Epistle is generally supposed to have been written but a short time before the destruction of the Jewish polity by the Romans. It is called a General Epistle, because it is not addressed to any particular church ; but, in truth, it has not the epistolary form of the other General Epistles of St. James and St. Peter. It is rather a didactic general discourse upon the principles, the experience, and practice of Christianity.

A.—What was its leading design ?

B.—Admirably simple as the sentences of the Apostle John are when taken separately, the connexion of them with each other is often rather difficult to trace, and especially as they often assume the form of great leading truths delivered

as aphorisms. The value of his writings is, however, thereby heightened, although their interpretation requires the closer attention. To enter into the meaning of this Epistle, we must consider the errors of the age in which it was written, and against which it was directed. St. John lived, you will recollect, to a later period than any of the other Apostles, and saw the pernicious heresies, to which the other Apostles allude as the offspring of pagan philosophy, assume a more mature form, more widely corrupting the first principles of Christianity, and leading the souls of men to destruction through vain and endless speculations.

A.—What are the errors you referred to?

B.—The first were those of a semi-Christian and semi-Pagan sect called the Docetæ, who, influenced by a notion we have before adverted to, the inherent depravity of matter, pretended that it was impossible that Christ should assume our flesh, and that his body was but a mere appearance or phantom.

A.—A wicked conclusion founded upon very silly premises.

B.—Truly so ; but this notion of the evil necessarily inherent in matter had a deep hold upon the philosophers of that age ; and so philosophizing Christians then, like some of their descendants now, made their Christianity give way to their philosophy.

A.—Perhaps, then, it is in reference to this notion of our Lord having a body in appearance only, which necessarily involved a denial of the atonement of Christ, because in that case his sufferings must have been also merely apparent, that St. John alludes in the first chapter where, with so much emphasis, he declares that not only had their eyes seen, but their “ hands had handled, the word of life.”

B.—This is very probable ; and also that he had the same error in view, when he says, “ And every spirit which confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” But there was another heresy to which he refers. The father of this was Cerinthus, a popular heresiarch of that early period. He was a Jew, had studied philosophy at Alexandria, and then propagated a system of Christianity framed upon his philo-

sophical opinions. Like other Gnostics, he held Christ to be one of the æons or emanations from God, of which we have before spoken, and also that the world was created by one æon, and redeemed by another ; both of which notions seem to be adverted to in the beginning of St. John's Gospel. It was afterwards, probably, that he fell into another error, (for men who will not submit their reason to the word of God are never at one stay,) which was, to deny that Jesus and Christ were the same person. In this he dissented from the Docetæ, who thought our Lord's body a phantom merely. He acknowledged that Jesus had a real existence, but that the Christ came upon him at baptism and left him at death. This notion, too, arose out of the philosophic dream, that a pure spirit could not be personally united to a material body.

A.—The heresy, then, which denied that Jesus and Christ were the same person, existing at so early a period, will explain other passages in this Epistle : “ Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ ? ” and, “ Whosoever shall confess that Jesus,” as well as Christ, “ is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

B.—There is little doubt but that the Cerinthian heresy is glanced at in these passages ; but you are also to observe, that they are so expressed as to be directed against all Jews who denied that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ ; and all who in modern times deny the pre-existence of Christ ; or that in his pre-existent nature he is the Son of God.

A.—St. John intermingles doctrinal statements with many exhortations to holiness and charity.

B.—Because all those false teachers were men of corrupt lives, and fomented divisions and strifes in the churches by their proud and heated disputations. But it is little to say that St. John exhorts to holiness and brotherly love ; he makes both the test of true Christianity, and shows how awfully men deceive themselves and others, when their profession of our divine religion leads neither to practical holiness nor to the Christian temper.

A.—I thought the term Antichrist had been chiefly used to designate Popery ; yet it is used in this Epistle.

B.—Whatever opposes Christ's true and pure doctrine, and, at the same time, pretends his authority, is here called anti-christ ; and Popery is so denominated only by way of eminence, as being the most extended and systematized form of anti-Christian doctrine which has appeared.

A.—These observations will assist me the better to understand this Epistle.

B.—But you will go but partially into its meaning, unless you carefully mark that deep and spiritual inward Christianity which it so forcibly portrays. A true Christian walks in the light ; is cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ ; has fellowship with God ; dwells in love ; dwells in God ; loves the brethren ; overcomes the world ; is born of God ; doth not commit sin ; keeps all God's commandments, and the new commandment, to love one another, in particular : He is taught heavenly wisdom, by the anointing or unction of the Holy Spirit, and has passed from a state of spiritual death into a state of spiritual life. It was not, therefore, for doctrinal orthodoxy merely, that this venerable Apostle contends in this most important discourse ; but for that internal work of the Spirit, from which alone all true external holiness, all meek, lowly, and loving tempers, and all vital fellowship with Christ can result.

A.—The Second Epistle of John is addressed to the elect lady and her children.

B.—This was probably some Christian lady of eminence, distinguished for her hospitable reception of the primitive Ministers of the Gospel, on their journeys to different churches. The object of it is, to guard her against receiving the teachers of false doctrine ; and he particularly specifies those who denied that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, alluding to the sects of the Docetæ and Cerinthians, before mentioned. This Christian matron is also commended for the religious manner in which she had educated her children, and is exhorted to steadfastness in the faith.

A.—The Third Epistle is addressed to Gaius : Who was he ?

B.—A converted Gentile ; probably a member of the church

at Corinth, distinguished for his hospitality to the saints, and to Ministers on their visits and travels. For his faith and liberality, he is affectionately commended by St. John. The Apostle, on the contrary, threatens Diotrephes with the censures of his apostolical authority for his affectation of pre-eminence in the church, and his harsh treatment of its members. This shows that St. John knew well how to unite, with his natural softness and kindness of manner, the firm and unshrinking exercise of a holy discipline, when the case required it.

A.—The next Epistle is that of Jude : Was he one of the Apostles ?

B.—Yes ; the same who is called Judas, and also Lebbeus and Thaddeus. He was the brother of James the Less, and cousin-german of our Lord. His Epistle bears a strong resemblance to the latter part of St. Peter's Second Epistle, and, like that, was intended to guard Christians against false teachers, and their disciples, who cancelled all the obligations to morality, and practised and taught all manner of licentiousness. It is here to be remarked, that it does not follow that all these were members of the Christian church. The heretical teachers belonging to the various sects of the Gnostics formed a distinct system, and collected themselves into separate communities ; but as they had formed their doctrine out of both Christianity and philosophy, they passed popularly for Christians, and brought great reproach upon the Christian name by their misconduct. They were, however, constantly endeavouring to make converts among Christians, and too often succeeded. Some of these apostates were expelled from the Christian churches ; and others, where discipline was relaxed, were permitted to remain among them. This circumstance caused great trouble to the Apostles ; and these perverters of truth were, therefore, dealt with in great and just severity. “ In the Epistle of Jude,” says Bishop Benson, “ there is an energy, a force, a grandeur of expression and style, an apparent labour for words and images expressive enough to give the reader a just and adequate idea of the profligate he exposes ; and the whole is admirably calculated

to show how deeply the holy Apostle was grieved at the scandalous immoralities of those who feigned themselves Christians, and with what fervour and courage he tore off the mask from these hypocrites, that the church and the world might see the turpitude and deformity that lurked beneath it."

A.—The last book in the sacred canon is entitled, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*: How came the title, "the Divine," to be given to him?

B.—Not by inspired authority; but it was used at an early period to mark the high character of his prophetic office, as distinguished by the depth of his acquaintance with the divine counsels.

A.—When were these revelations made to St. John?

B.—In the reign of the Emperor Domitian, when the church was under persecution, and himself in banishment in the island of Patmos.

A.—What may be its general design?

B.—It will occur to you, that when the pagan Roman empire had begun to arouse itself to persecute the churches in every place, with a furious and exterminating zeal, the thoughts of Christians would be turned very anxiously to the result. Still further, those general persecutions succeeded each other with increasing violence, and with but short respites, to the number of ten; the last of which, under Diocletian, destroyed such incredible numbers of Christians, that the advocates of Paganism boasted that the victory over the hated religion of Christ was complete. In such circumstances, the hearts of many would naturally "tremble for the ark of God;" and had they not been supported by prophecies which referred to these events, and previously indicated the overthrow of pagan Rome, and the triumphs of the church, the most zealous and heroic might have been involved in much perplexity. Again: This church, so marvellously delivered from pagan persecution, by the accession of Constantine the Great, fell away from faith and purity; and days almost as dark as those of Paganism fell upon it in the middle ages. It became persecuting itself, and the few faithful were doomed to suffer, from nominal Christians, what the early Christians endured from pagan

idolaters. In these ages, the few and scattered followers of Christ needed the same kind of support and consolation, as those of the persecuted primitive church. The latter saw the formidable civil power of pagan Rome arrayed against the cause of Christ, and threatening it with extermination ; the former saw the eastern and western Antichrists, embodied with, and upheld by, all secular authority, and carrying on the same warfare against the faithful, and aiming at nothing less than their violent extirpation. You can therefore, I think, easily infer, from this, the purpose of the prophecies of this book.

A.—Truly, as they point out the successive overthrow of all persecuting and corrupt systems, and the secular powers which uphold them, and open the glorious scene of the ultimate triumphs and glory of the church, I see a clear exhibition of the wisdom and goodness of God in providing for his people, and especially in dark and troubled times, the support and consolations of a book opening to them views so important and joyous. Still, however, may I not ask whether the obscurity of its predictions did not diminish its effect ?

B.—I presume not. The prophecies in this book are not generally more obscure than those which related to Messiah in the Old Testament. Yet these were sufficiently understood as to their general import to preserve the faith and hope of the ancient saints through successive ages. You are also to distinguish between the obscurity of a prophecy as to the minute circumstances and the particular time of its fulfilment, and its leading import. I do not think that you even profess to know much of the meaning of this book ; you have not studied it ; and you are too young to enter upon it with the view of going very deeply into its meaning. Your own good sense will dictate to you to study the plainer parts of the New Testament with all the assistances you can meet with to open to you their meaning, before you encounter these difficulties ; and yet, I doubt not, that you have already derived, from reading it, general views of great importance. Tell me then, what are the impressions which it has made upon you ?

A.—You have put the matter in a way I did not anticipate ;

and yet I confess that I am conscious of having been impressed with several general considerations, as I have gone through it, rather bewildered amidst its sublime scenes and awful imagery, than understanding any one prophecy clearly.

B.—Recollect these impressions, and state them in order.

A.—The messages to the seven churches, besides the particular truths which they contain, suggested to me the serious moral, that the eye of Christ is upon those who profess his name every where ; and that, gracious as he is to the sincere, and patient as to the unfruitful, he is still a righteous Judge in his church ; so that we ought to “tremble for fear of his judgments,” as well as “hope in his mercy.” I could not, also, but be impressed with the thought, that we are taught by this book that the government of this world is in the hands of One who is higher than the highest ; that nothing happens by chance ; that when proud and persecuting powers are permitted for a time, it must be for purposes of wisdom not yet fully developed, because they are with infinite ease cast down by Him against whom they exalt themselves ; and that, at his command, mighty angels fly, and all the elements of nature are moved to avenge upon them his cause, and to be the agents of his “just and holy judgments.” I could not, also, but remark how delightful a contrast this book exhibits between the scenes opened in heaven, and those presented by this earth, dark, violent, troubled, and wretched. And the visions of glory, of God, the orders of angels, the hosts of glorified saints, and their elevated and blissful employment, seemed to render it of very little consequence what afflictions any of Christ’s persecuted saints endured individually for a few short days on earth, when this invisible and glorious throng seemed arranged on the very confines of the world of light, to welcome the persecuted faithful into the joy of their Lord.

B.—And you must now perceive, from these general impressions made upon you in reading this book, how admirably adapted it was, especially to all suffering and gloomy periods of the church. In them it has been “a light arising in darkness ;” and we shall never know, till the day of eternity, how

many depressed spirits it has cheered, what vigour it has given to the zeal of saints, and what strength it has imparted to them to suffer. But have you learned no other general truth from it ?

A.—I have learned that the cause of Christ shall ultimately triumph ; and that, “ though these shall make war upon the Lamb,” yet “ the Lamb shall overcome them.”

B.—And surely this is a most interesting prospect, that in “ the evening time ” of the world “ it shall be light ; ” and that, lashed as the stream of time has been throughout its course by storms and tempests, and darkened by the lowering clouds which have swept over it, it shall at length flow on in tranquillity, brightened by the reflections of clearer skies. He who considers the felicity, personal, domestic, and national, which must result from the establishment of the spiritual reign of Christ, extended over all nations, will in deep and transported feeling anticipate the grateful exultation of that sublime song, mentioned in the fifth chapter, where the Apostle hears “ every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

A.—I think I have read some writer who observes, that although the Revelation is a very mortifying book to a mind eager in pursuit of the knowledge of future things, it is a very edifying one to a heart solicitous about maxims and precepts.

B.—And so you will find it ; but although much obscurity, as to those of its prophecies which manifestly relate to the future, shrouds its mystic visions, yet many parts of it have had a very clear fulfilment. The destruction of the pagan Roman empire ; the rise, triumph, and decline of Mohammedanism ; the rise of the western antichrist, its heresies and blasphemies, its persecutions of the saints, and visible decline, have all been very satisfactorily pointed out, by many Divines who have written upon this book, as fulfilled, together with various other particular circumstances, both of judgment and

mercy, which have been involved in these great events. And as pious and learned men will always be found to mark the events of history, and compare them with these prophecies, they will gradually unfold their import ; and the whole, when fulfilled, will stand, like many of the prophetic books of the Old Testament,—a glorious monument that our religion has Him for its Author, who “knows the end from the beginning.”

A.—There are, I believe, many persons who pretend very rashly to explain these unfulfilled predictions.

B.—And when you meet with very confident persons of this class, you may recollect the following sentiments of the equally learned and modest Sir Isaac Newton :—“ The folly of interpreters has been to foretel times and things by this prophecy of the Revelation, as if God designed to make them Prophets. The design of God was, when he gave them this and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men’s curiosity by enabling them to foreknow things, but to the end that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event ; and so his own providence, not the wisdom or skill of the interpreters, be manifested thereby to the world.”

A.—The imagery of this book seems to me to possess a grandeur, and, if I may so express myself, a heavenliness, above even that employed by the Prophets of the Old Testament.

B.—It is often of the same order, and in many places is drawn from that employed by the ancient Prophets ; but the whole is greatly heightened by the “ light and immortality brought to light by the Gospel.” The entrance of Christ into the holy places, not made with hands, opened their glories to the view of this great evangelical Prophet with a distinctness which was not, and could not be, vouchsafed under the former dispensation ; and as to the style generally, the remarks of an eminent critic are equally just and forcibly expressed : “ It is in vain to look for more lofty descriptions or majestic images than you find in this sacred book. Could the acclamations and hallelujahs of heaven be expressed with more magnificence than by the shouts of vast multitudes, the roaring of many

waters, and the sound of loud thunders, whilst all this strength of sound is tempered with a sweetness and harmony suited to the celestial ear, and the most exalted taste? The description of the Son of God, chapter xix. 11—17, is in all the pomp and grandeur of language. We have every circumstance which most forcibly expresses power and justice, majesty and goodness, to raise admiration, and to mingle awe with love. The conclusion of the whole, too, is worthy of closing the divine volume of inspiration. It leaves the thoughts in heaven, to which all its doctrines, examples, and institutions are intended to lead us; and although the description of the heavenly Jerusalem is in the style of the easterns, its force must be every where felt. Earthly riches and splendour, gold and precious stones, trees and streams, are but the feeble images of its magnificence and beauty, whilst the glory of God lightens it, the nations of the saved only walk there; no defilement enters it, ‘there is no more curse,’ ‘and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.’ ”

But as we have only hastily glanced, in these Conversations, at the different books of the New Testament, I must now refer you to a more diligent and constant study of them, with prayer to God, that he may, by his Holy Spirit, lead you into all truth, and make his Gospel to you “the power of God unto salvation.” The evidence of the truth of these holy writings as built upon the fulfilment of prophecy, and great and numerous miracles, we have occasionally remarked; but I wish, before we part, to impress upon your attention that internal fitness and excellence which appears in every part of them, and which will display itself to you with brighter lustre the more carefully and diligently you read them. Whatever is of importance for man as a moral, accountable, and immortal being to know, is here taught, and that in principles so deep and full as to afford inexhaustible subjects of contemplation; whatever is necessary for man’s moral dignity and true happiness to attain, is not only described, but is the subject of gracious promise, so that the holiness which is so

perfectly and beautifully exhibited is matter of possible attainment to all who seek it. The Scriptures are books especially for the troubled and afflicted ; and we can be in no case of destitution or sorrow, but we must feel that they sympathize with us, and open to us the way to a throne of grace, where we may find mercy, and grace to help in time of need ; we must die, but their hopes turn the shadows of death into the light of morning, to all who believe on Him who is “ the resurrection and the life ; ” and a future world is now no longer a land unknown, a dark and uncertain region, exciting a fearful imagination in proportion to its obscurity. The gates of life, eternal and blissful life, were thrown open to us by the ascension of our Lord ; and his faithful promise was left behind, “ Where I am ye shall be also.” Thus our present and future condition are both equally provided for ; and the path of faith and duty is the certain path of “ glory, honour, and immortality.” If, then, you leave this divine religion, whither will you go ? Infidelity promises you nothing but endless doubts ; it quenches every celestial hope which Christianity has kindled in the heart of man ; destroys every principle of virtuous action, and leaves those who are seduced by its affectation of superior knowledge, to a life spent without God, and a death without hope. Fly, then, its artifices ; and forsake not “ the guide of your youth, nor the covenant of your God.” Nor rest in a nominal Christianity, having a form of godliness, but denying, or remaining destitute of, its power. Walk under an impression of the divine presence and majesty ; let your whole trust be in the atonement of your Saviour ; yield up your heart to the hallowing influences of the Holy Spirit ; greatly reverence the Sabbaths of the Lord, and the ordinances of his house ; neglect no duty ; be instant in prayer ; mark the providences of God, and trust your affairs in his hand ; take no step in life without asking his counsel ; fly to him in all exigencies ; and, finally, in your thoughts steadily connect time with eternity. You have been making inquiries, in these Conversations, respecting Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, the distinguished names of the three grand dispensations of religion to mankind ; but where are

they? All these venerable characters you have seen in succession pass before you, with the men of their generation, into another and an eternal state. You are borne along by the same ever-flowing stream, and shall soon be no longer an inhabitant of earth. Eternity is your home; and it shall be a blissful one, if you follow these great examples. The track of their footsteps still shines, and will for ever shine, in the darkness of this world to guide yours; mark it with steady attention; let no difficulty, no temptation, affright or seduce you from it; “encompassed” as you are “with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race which is set before you, looking unto Jesus.”

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO

**SCOUGAL'S "LIFE OF GOD IN THE
SOUL OF MAN."**

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

TO

SCOUGAL'S "LIFE OF GOD IN THE SOUL OF MAN."

THE ground and reason of Religion is the insufficiency of man. Search as we may, we shall find no principle so deeply laid in truth ; so comprehensive and important in its bearings. We cannot sustain our natural life any more than we could give it ; we cannot, beyond a certain and very limited degree, control the innumerable circumstances which surround us, and affect us for good and for evil ; we find nothing on earth which satisfies our desires ; a sense of guilt presses our conscience with a load which it cannot throw off ; and we shall soon enter a new and unknown state of being, over the condition of which we have no control. What greater proofs can we have of our own nothingness ?

Wherever any form of religion has existed, this principle has been at least tacitly acknowledged by men of all ages, and of all countries. The office of all religious rites has been to connect man in friendly relations with powers superior to himself ; to avert their wrath, or to secure their favourable interposition. In the ruder rites of barbarians, in the splendid ceremonial of civilized nations, the reason and the end are the same ; men have filled the earth with the monuments of their own confessed weakness ; and they have every where, and in every age, recognised this truth,—that the help, the comfort, and the hope of human beings rest, not upon themselves, but upon some invisible agency, more wise, more active, more powerful than the feeble being who trembles before it.

But "an idol," says St. Paul, "is nothing in the world." That one word opens to the contemplative mind one of the

most affecting views of the deep dereliction of the countless myriads who in all ages have “walked in the vain show” of pagan mythologies, and who, though always deceived, have still confided in them. Thus pressed by his weaknesses, his guilt, and his fears, the Heathen flies for succour to a figment of his own fancy ; to that which is “nothing in the world ;” which has no existence among creatures in heaven or in earth. Even religion, with him, is illusive as a feverish dream ; and when he calls upon his God, there is neither “voice nor sound” responsive to his prayers ; he spends life in pursuit of a phantom, and he dies in despair.

But, if “the gods of the Heathen are vanity, the Lord made the heavens.” The object of true religion is the true God ; and the true religion is that which so leads us to God as to connect all the wants of man, as a moral and accountable being, a creature at once mortal and immortal, with the sufficiency, not only of a real, but of an infinite, Being. “I am God all-sufficient ; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”*

But what is that religion which is the true way to God ? and in what respects is that all-sufficiency of God imparted to those who in this way approach him ? These are most important inquiries.

Pure and holy creatures are always represented in Scripture in immediate intercourse with God. Philosophy considers this intercourse as mediate only through the creatures ; and it would take no offence at their being represented as engaged in tracing the wonders of the planetary and sidereal heavens ; exploring the elements of earth, and deducing general laws from wide and scrutinizing surveys of natural phenomena ; and, whilst thus employed, as recognising and magnifying the wisdom and power of the Creator. Here would be a fine intellect nobly employed ; here would be exhibited that species of sentiment, a mingled feeling of admiration and gratified taste, which is in truth the only devotional religion which the philosophy of man allows. The doctrine of the Scriptures goes higher ; it represents these pure spirits, whether angels

* Genesis xvii. 1 Old Translation.

who never sinned, or saints glorified, as with God; in his presence, gazing upon glories revealed, not only from his works, but from disclosures and manifestations of himself. Rapt into ecstasy, inflamed with love, silent with awe, they "see him as he is," and become "like him;" they behold his glory, and are "changed into the same image."

This kind of communion with God, "the fountain of life," having both an external and internal manifestation, each proper to itself, man, in his first estate, enjoyed as well as the angels; though the one was less radiant, the other less intense, in his case, as suited to a feebler though yet unstained nature. The expulsion of the first offenders from the visible manifestations of the divine glory in Paradise was but the outward sign of the forfeiture of their higher interior communion with God. The effect of sin is to separate between God and man; between his dependent spiritual nature, and the vital influence of the all-sufficient nature of God. "So he drove out the man;" and the wilderness of earth, cursed for his sake, and yielding thorns and briars, was a less painful contrast to the verdure and beauty of the garden of God, than that presented by a soul "naked, and sick, and void of God," once so near, now afar off. As mere philosophy cannot comprehend the true nature of the communion of an innocent intelligence with God; so it is insensible to the true character of that separation between God and the soul of man which has been effected by human offence. This is only fully discovered by the Spirit which convinces of sin.

To this moment, every man unrecovered by grace, is, in this affecting sense, "without God in the world." The illustrations of this sad truth which experience and observation furnish are too painfully convincing. Nor is it necessary to go to the sensualist, he who is emphatically "in the flesh," for confirmation of the fact; nor to the gay trifler, who places pleasure in the absence of all serious thought; nor to the sordid spirit, absorbed in, and encrusted with, the cares of this life. This alienation from God is as conspicuous when intellect and taste are awakened as when they sleep; in the man of reflection and genius, as in those prostrate spirits whose sole inquiry

through every day's existence is, "What shall we eat, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" It is, alas! no uncommon case, to see a man at once wise and wicked, sentimental and indevout; with a genius capable of seizing every form of beauty, and every trace of grandeur, which both nature and morals present, and employing them to adorn and illustrate his own conceptions, and so that he shall be warmed by his subject into ardour, or melted into softness; and yet, when the excitement is spent, he shall subside into his own native earthiness, and revel in the gross indulgencies of a masterful sensual appetite. It is not the mere employment of the thoughts on the works of God which leads to God. The spacious temple of this visible universe may be entered, scrutinized, and admired; calculation and measurement may be applied to its expansive dome, and its ever-burning lamps of celestial fire; the strength and proportions of its massive pillars may be displayed; the appendages of use and ornament with which it is filled may be arranged with systematizing skill, and their discovered relations, uses, and wondrous workmanship, may give a lively interest to long and deep investigations, whilst the majesty of its great Builder shall still wholly fail to prostrate the spirit in humility, and not a penitential sigh shall escape a heart bowed down under an overwhelming sense of the fact, that against this Being of power and glory infinite, innumerable sins have been committed by the worm that treads his awful courts. Even the doctrines of religion itself may occupy the studies of men; they may spend days and nights in a critical and exact investigation of the written revelations made by God himself; they may become champions of the orthodox faith, and may contend for it with all the ardour and expertness of well-learned and earnest controversialists; they may observe the forms and ordinances which God has instituted for the purpose of opening communion between them and himself, whilst yet the middle wall of an invisible but palpable partition rises betwixt them and their Maker; and as to any effectual change in that moral habit, which constitutes the alienation of man from God, they stand on the same level, and are undistinguished from the mass of an unthinking and openly ungodly world.

If this, then, be the true state of fallen man, where is the true way to God? Through whatever medium it lies, the gate which leads to it is a lowly penitence; that alone breaks the first opening through a barrier impervious and insuperable by every other means. To "turn to God" is the phrase by which the holy Scriptures designate the first step back to him which can be taken by a revolted creature; and it is accompanied with "weeping and with supplication." "Seeking God" is another of those descriptive expressions which so strongly mark the feelings and the movements of an awakened spirit. The terms themselves indicate, not only something lost, but loss of the greatest good; of God himself, his image, his friendship, his felicitating influence. If even a true sense of this loss can never be commensurate with the vastness of the privation, it cannot be a superficial and evanescent feeling. The departure of a soul from God is so great an evil in itself, and implies so much positive misery as the involved consequence, that if the case be truly, although still inadequately, revealed to us by that Spirit whose office it is to "convince of sin," the combination of a strong sense of want, of guilt, and of danger, must pierce, pain, and oppress the heart, now truly described as "broken and contrite." The gauge and measure of this feeling is nowhere stated in that volume which has revealed "repentance towards God" as the first indispensable term of salvation; that may vary in different persons, as it is connected with different temperaments, or the "divers workings" of the self-same Spirit; but he who takes his views of repentance from the Scriptures, can never confine it to a mere change of opinion, or resolve it wholly into a conviction of the judgment. In every view in which it is presented to us, it is assumed to affect the heart, and that deeply. It is "poverty of spirit;" it is "mourning;" it is "godly sorrow;" it is the alarm which impels men to "fly from the wrath to come;" it is a being "pricked in the heart;" it is abasement before the divine Majesty manifested in the glory of its holiness: "Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts;" it con-

fesses desert of extreme punishment, and it renounces every plea but that which rests upon pure mercy. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" was the expression of an emotion so deep and powerful, that he who felt it was at once so aware of danger that he "smote upon his breast;" and so conscious of the absence of all merit, that "he stood afar off."

The parable or history just alluded to, conveys important instruction to us in another respect. It teaches us also that the same feeling in all its depth and force is as necessary in the repentance of the seemingly virtuous as in the openly wicked. The Pharisee who was rejected, just needed the humility, the penitence, the sorrow of the publican who was accepted; and it was because he neither saw nor felt his sin and danger, nor sorrowfully confessed God's justice in connecting punishment with sin, nor pleaded an unmerited mercy, that he was sent empty away. All might be true which he affirmed of his external virtues; but the virtues of unregenerate men are not virtues towards God; and the hidden sins of the heart are as much in proof of its utter corruption, are as much violations of the holiness of the law of God, and are as strongly linked with the penalty of transgression, death, eternal death, as the visible sins of the life. Society is more injured by one class of offences; but, as to the dishonour done to God, and the rebellious actings of the creature, they are equal. So withers, under the reproving breath of the word of God, the most goodly show of mere human virtue.

It is most necessary for us also to know, that the repentance which is our first step in our return to God, is not mere emotion; that it does not, and cannot, terminate in sorrows, sighs, and tears. It is itself a work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, wrought with reference to an end beyond itself, to which end it tends with a force proportionate to its own influence. It is therefore an aspiration after safety, which cannot rest till safety is attained; a struggle for liberty, which impels the spirit, conscious of its own inability to break its chain, to that almighty Deliverer which the Gospel exhibits and proclaims; it pleads for pardon, and refuses every comfort which arises not from that attested and assured attainment; and it restlessly

seeks that peace which only a revelation of the personal interest which the soul has in Christ's atonement can give.

Such are the strong and ceaseless tendencies of an evangelical repentance; on which first effort towards salvation so many persons unhappily fall into errors soothing to a false peace, and therefore fatal. But still, there is nothing in mere repentance to effect actual reconciliation with God, and to place the alienated and disinherited child within the paternal arms and welcome roof of our heavenly Father. Nothing can be more obvious than that, under a righteous administration, such as that to which we are all subject, repentance, however deep, can be no reason of forgiveness; since, were that the universal rule, it would amount to the abolition of all law, by the forgiveness of offenders upon their sorrow for sin,—a feeling which must be produced in all as soon as the danger of punishment is made manifest;—and thus the righteous character of the Governor of the world could have no manifestation. The notion, too, of the meritorious efficacy of penitential emotions and exercises, indulged by too many, renders the atonement for sin made by Christ superfluous. It is this, however, according to the constant doctrine of the New Testament, which alone harmonizes the exercise of mercy with an administration which never departs from a strict rule of righteousness, and thus lays a solid foundation for our hope. It is this which declares “the righteousness of God for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Our repentance, if real, not only confesses the fact of innumerable offences, but bows to the justice of the very sentence it dreads; and acknowledges that its sighs and tears, and the feelings from which they issue, can have no merit, because death is still felt to be deserved: And if no merit, that is, if there is nothing in this whole process of contrition, humiliation, and efforts at reformation, which upholds the claims of justice, and the authority of the divine law, whilst, in respect of it, its sentence is relaxed; then do the sterner attributes of God, and the righteous character which is stamped upon his administration, stand eternally opposed to the remission of sin merely on

account of the repentance of the guilty. It ought ever, therefore, to be felt, that the efficacy of repentance consists simply in the revelations which it makes of our lost condition, the alarms which it excites as to our danger, and the manner in which it urges us, at the call and invitation of the divine mercy in the Gospel, to fly to the propitiation which God has set forth through faith in the blood of Christ. From this propitiation all our hope arises ; but that which instrumentally connects us personally with its available merit, so that its efficacy passes over to us, is the personal trust of a heart cut off from all other dependence, and cordially and fully accepting the free and unmerited grace which, in God's method of justifying the ungodly, is exhibited to us. Then, and not till then, we regain the favour and image of God, by that joint act by which our sins are remitted, and our natures created anew ; then we find access to God through Christ, the way to the Father. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Such is the way to God opened to us by the immeasurable mercies of our Redeemer, and by which the most alienated spirit, however dark, corrupt, and guilty, finds readmission to the family of God ; and, now placed again in relations of friendship to God, finds that interior intercourse and communion opened with him as God all-sufficient, from the loss of which its moral degradation, and all its consequent miseries, have resulted.

If it is asked, in what the great effect of that restored intercourse consists, it cannot be more powerfully or more scripturally described than by the subject of the following excellent Treatise : It is the communication of life, “the life of God, in the soul of man.” The whole process of awakening, and repentance, the fervour of prayer, and the actings of faith, is the commencement of the operation of this principle ; but when man is justified by faith, that vital union is effected towards which all previous exercises have but tended ; and the true believer is then, in the full sense, “in Christ ;” and his internal habit is to “live by him.”

That this life is a new and distinct principle infused into

the soul, and there maintained and nurtured by the Holy Spirit, is, indeed, as manifest as experience and observation both can make it. We have animal life, on which feeling, motion, and the other functions of the body depend ; we have intellectual life, of which reason, memory, imagination, and various affections, are the results ; but we still want a principle from which shall result all the moral phenomena which we sum up in the word "holiness." This is not animal life ; it is not intellectual life ; since man may be a perfect animal and reasonable being, and yet exhibit a total destitution of holiness. He may live utterly regardless of the majesty of God, and uninfluenced by his mercy ; he may have no desires after his favour, do nothing in respect to his will, desire no intercourse with him ; and yet lack no property which constitutes human nature. From whence, then, does that change arise, which gives him tastes the reverse of any he was ever before conscious of ; fears, as to unseen objects, which, though known before, effected no alarm ; and strong desires after moral deliverance from the guilt and bondage of a state in which he was before content to live in peace ? How is it that new trains of thought occupy his spirit, and a new language flows from his lips ? that he now courts a new society, "the saints and excellent of the earth, who excel in virtue," and that he "loves the brethren" whom before he ridiculed and despised with all the contemptuousness of that carnal mind which is enmity to God ? that prayer and thanksgiving to God, and the habitual actings of faith in the atonement of Christ, by whom he has access to God, have taken the place of those lifeless services of an occasional and merely external devotion in which he trusted ? Here are phenomena to be accounted for. Some strange thing has happened ; he is not what he was ; he is become even the reverse of all that before constituted his character, in its moral sense ; and perhaps so suddenly, that nothing has surprised his immediate friends more than this visible and palpable, and often this lamented, transformation. He was gay ; and he steals from the circles of pleasure, to mourn his sins before God. His eye was roving, and his manner listless, in the sanctuary ;

now he hears and prays, as feeling that eternal consequences hang upon the result. He was absorbed in the cares of this life ; he now, for the first time, feels the weight of his soul's concerns, and the solemn question of salvation. Scoffers resolve all this into fanaticism ; and so far they conclude well, that it must be referred to some new principle, under the influence of which, by some strange means, the heart has been brought. It is not necessary to stay to show that real fanaticism can no more produce such effects than animal magnetism ; and that whatever does produce them is too high, too hallowed, to be injured by an opprobrious name. If we believe the Scriptures in truth, the case is there explicitly determined ; and their decision is, that the new principle which has formed this new character is the communication of spiritual life from God. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Of the resurrection of the body, it is obvious that St. Paul does not here speak ; and he must therefore be understood to assert that, in consequence of the resurrection and ascension of Christ,—events which were followed by the effusion of the Holy Spirit,—a quickening influence is exerted upon the souls of men, previously dead in trespasses and sins, the effect of which is to produce that spiritual-mindedness which is so strongly and beautifully expressed by “our sitting together with Christ in heavenly places.” There the thoughts of a true believer are henceforward habitually placed ; there his whole trust and hope repose ; and to this new and spiritual class of objects his affections are now effectually allured.

The manner of this mysterious communication of a new principle, so marked in its effects, is not explained to us. How the Holy Spirit takes our faculties into his own hands, and gives them this direction, and by planting new principles within us,—such as the filial fear of God, and filial love to him,—places upon them a new and powerful, and even con-

trary, bias, is a matter more curious, probably, than useful to us, did we even know it; but that the influence by which the effect is produced, is direct from the Holy Spirit, and that it must be permanent, in order to maintain the effect, is so manifestly the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, that we must resort to the most unlicensed interpretations, and unbridled paraphrases, to make any one of innumerable texts give out a contrary sense. For how shall we understand the union of the vine and the branches, if we do not admit that it teaches the communication and the supply of the principle of life, growth, and fruitfulness? How is it that Christ manifests himself to his disciples as he does not unto the world, unless in the direct influences of his Spirit? For if this manifestation were but the unveiling of the truth of his doctrine to them, it would render wholly unintelligible the promise which immediately follows, that he and the Father would come to them, and make their abode with them. How, too, shall we understand the Spirit's office, on the theory of indirect influence? Shall we confine it to the Apostles, and confound ordinary with extraordinary operations, and come to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit, who was to abide for ever with the church, has now left it, because prophecies have ceased, tongues have failed, and miraculous powers have no longer been vouchsafed? And if we, on the contrary, admit, that the promise of the Father is still shed upon them that believe, what does the misleading, and, indeed, the absurd, doctrine of the indirect influence of the Spirit mean more than, what might be expressed, in better and more honest phrase, "the influence of the word?"—a notion which involves the proud and self-righteous conclusion, that whatever the word is to me, more than it is to another, whether of direction, comfort, or sanctity, it becomes so solely because I, by my own unaided efforts, give it its efficacy; and that, instead of being regenerated by a divine power, using the word as the instrument, (which is the way in which St. Paul states the case,) I have regenerated myself by its instrumentality.

Such glorious truths as that Christ dwells in the hearts of true believers by faith; that he is the vital Head which

gives vigour to every member of his body mystical ; that by him we draw near to God ; and that there is a communion of the Holy Ghost, cannot be so reduced and neutralized, so long as we apply the same principles of interpretation to the Bible, as, by the common consent of all men, are applied to all other writings. They shine there with an effulgence which nothing can darken ; and they are, in their obvious meaning and import, a blessed part of the daily experience of all truly devout and spiritual persons, and have been so in all ages. They have been understood from the very days of the Apostles ; and the church has never wanted witnesses, even in the worst ages, to confirm the truth of a conscious indwelling of God as the fountain of life in man, by their own experience.

There is, however, no small danger, lest, whilst we admit the important truth, that Christ is so the way to the Father, as that, through faith in him, we rise into a real and vital fellowship of spirit with God, we should hold it too generally, and with too much dependence upon the means by which that state is attained and confirmed. We are prone to self-dependence, and are too often led to place some instrument between ourselves and God, by a few of those plausibilities which this creaturely spirit is so ingenious to devise. Much is said, for instance, on the adaptation of certain instruments and aids of piety to effect the purposes for which they are instituted, which tends, undesignedly, no doubt, in many, to detach the soul from its simple and direct dependence upon God, and in that proportion to interrupt or weaken its intercourse with Him in whom are all our springs, and from whose immediate communications alone, our spiritual supplies can be received. The very truth which is contained in the notion of the adaptation and fitness of that class of instruments which are commonly called the means of grace to effect their ends, does itself become dangerous, unless clearly apprehended, and held under its proper limitations. There is in them an infinite and adorable wisdom. The nature of the truths which the written word of God exhibits, the varied style and dress in which they are arrayed, and the examples which live and act before us in the sacred page, embodying them in real character,

and showing their effects in real consequence, are all adapted to produce correspondent impressions upon our mind ; to rouse by greatness, to melt by tenderness, to constrain by conviction, to animate by action. The same word, delivered to man by the living ministry, assumes to itself other adaptations. The living voice, the flow of feeling, the power of reasoning or eloquence, the solemnity of appeal from an ambassador of heaven, or the persuasive counsels of the anxious Pastor, who watches over our souls as one who must give account, have all their fitness to produce effects, and appeal to something which God has planted in the very constitution of our nature receptive of the impression. There is a calm in the Sabbath which seems to hush the cares of life, and to prepare the spirit for the proper work of the hallowed day ; there is an impressiveness in the solemn assemblies of God's house ; and there is in the act of prayer itself, whether offered in private or in public, an approach to the divine Majesty so direct, and so necessary a recognition of our own dependence, that to be wholly indifferent in such a service would seem to require no small struggle with our own feelings and resolutions. All this, and even much more, must be admitted ; but the conclusion to which some appear to have come, that these divinely-appointed instruments of our religious improvement work the effect by some natural efficacy of their own operating upon the constitution of our nature, is surely to be guarded against. This view has also been extended to prayer, which is sometimes said to prepare the heart for the divine blessing, not relatively, as offered in confession of our own wants, and as an act of trust in God through Christ ; but morally, as either giving us a fitness to receive his grace, or as producing in us, by a reflex influence, those changes of principle and temper which it is the office of that grace to effect by its own direct agency. Even faith has thus also been converted into a moral instrument ; and those moral effects have been attributed to a firm and indubitable intellectual assent to truth, which are only derivable from Christ alone, who is the proper object of our trust, in order that he, and not our faith in him, may work them in us.

Alas, that we should ever forget our own total insufficiency, and the inefficacy of mere instrumental causes, when the fact is that we are nothing, and that, without Christ, we can do nothing, however numerous or fitting the instruments may be to which we resort ! Even prayer and faith, when rightly understood, necessarily imply this. We solicit help from another, because we need that which we cannot ourselves supply ; and our trust in another supposes, that we are bowed down under an imbecility, which renders it necessary to repose on a power higher than ourselves. If we ask light from Christ, we surely confess our darkness ; if deliverance, that ours is a bondage which no other power can break ; if purity, that we are unholy beyond all remedy by any process of moral healing which we can put into operation upon ourselves. If we trust in his perfect atonement, we profess at least to acknowledge a perfect demerit in man ; and if we receive in faith the promise of the Holy Spirit, we confess that the exercise of a supernatural influence alone is adequate to raise this prostrate nature of ours into any degree of moral elevation, and to advance our restoration into a “ meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.” If, therefore, in these more spiritual exercises of prayer and faith, which are the real efforts of a soul after God, we see nothing but mere instituted instrumentality, no moral efficiency at all in themselves, but the simple means by which a creature, all guilt and helplessness, comes to God through Christ, that he may be made to him “ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; ” of all which he is the only source, and all which must be imparted by him, through whatever channel he may please to convey them ; then surely the mere external ordinances and circumstances of religion, wisely ordered as they are, and calculated to awaken attention, feeling, and interest, by their adaptation to produce impression by laws fixed in our nature, are still in themselves but mere instruments, having no efficiency, but as they lead us both from ourselves, and from themselves also, to God in Christ. Even the impression they produce, that is, the feeling they inspire, is as instrumental in its character, if it is worth any thing, as that by which it is

produced. It is greatly delusive to rest in this as an end ; and thus to mistake mere excitement for piety, and sentiment for devotion. These are natural effects ; but they are seized by the Holy Spirit, to be made the instruments of effects beyond themselves. By the faculties of our nature he works his own renewing process in the heart of man, but still only by them, making use of the convictions of the judgment, to infix those deeper convictions of the conscience, in which only the vitality of truth is seen ; and, through natural sentiment, implanting a feeling distinct in its nature, though operating through that to new and higher objects. Thus the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and carries the soul habitually upward in heavenly aspirations, devout thoughts, and uninterrupted intercourses, to the perennial fountain of spiritual and eternal life, infinitely beyond the range of the natural faculty which is thus called into action ; thus the ordinary benevolence of nature is heightened into the lofty grace of charity to man ; and thus true zeal is inspired, the principle of which is a restless jealousy for the honour of God, attempered by the constraining love of Christ, and tenderest sympathy for the immortal interests of our fellow-sinners.

Behold, then, the way to God laid open through the Mediator ; the access to the mercy-seat, through the rending of the veil ; the glory upon the sprinkled mercy-seat, and God communing with man, so as to receive his prayers, and to shine forth from between the cherubim in rays of light and influence upon his worshipper, in token of acceptance. If by the habitual actings of faith I dwell there, “ I dwell in God, and God in me.” I seek him in his sanctuaries ; and I find, not well-composed ordinances, and the merely natural sentiments of awe and delight which they are calculated to inspire, but I find the Lord of the temple himself, and know that there is now a more glorious sense in which he dwells with man upon earth, than in the visible Schechinah which filled the temple of Solomon. If, in the exercise of the same faith, I turn inward into my own heart, I find him there ; for “ he dwells with you, and shall be in you.” Here is my strength to do, and my strength to suffer ; here is that “ well of living

water" promised by our Lord, " springing up into everlasting life." Then I understand how " I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me." I cannot feel solitude, for God is with me. My happiness is no longer bound up with external circumstances; for the highest source of real comfort opened to me lies beyond the reach of the accidents of the joys and sorrows of this outward scene; there is a quiet haven of interior peace into which the waves of an agitated world are not suffered to roll; or, if they ruffle the surface by their distant shock, they penetrate not into its depths of assured tranquillity: " Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Here, too, is my guard against temptation; the manifested presence of God is the life of the conscience, as his teaching is its light, and gives to it a sensitiveness which shrinks at the slightest touch of sin. The desires which are thus awakened are boundless, as expatiating in an infinite good, ever giving and never exhausted; perfect satisfaction, and insatiate aspirings after richer supplies and nearer intercourse, strangely there unite in a heart which is at once at rest and restless, ever fixed as on a moveless rock, ever forgetting things behind, and pressing to those things which are before; and thus it is that the sanctification of the soul ever advances under the direct influence of the Sanctifier. Beholding this glory with unveiled face, and coming thus under its transforming energy, we are " changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is true Christianity; it is neither merely formal, nor merely doctrinal; it has forms, and it has doctrines, but to both it adds vitality. Thus the gulf is passed which the original offence placed between God and his creature; and it is passed through Christ, the way to the Father, and by the instrumentality of that trust in him which is produced by the agency of the Holy Spirit, in a broken and contrite heart. This fellowship is maintained and strengthened by the exercise of this same faith from first to last; by thus " cleaving to the Lord" in direct and simple dependence with purpose of heart. But, glorious as this the true and hidden life of a Christian now is, it is but incipient life. It puts much into possession;

but, such is the fulness of the grace of Christ, that is but a pledge, an earnest of that eternal life which is the prize of our high calling. What that is we must die to know ; how fresh, how bright, how copious, how deep, the stream of the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, unmixed with any imperfection of earth, which flows from under the throne of God and the Lamb, we shall know when we “ shall be ever with the Lord.”

The various actings of this divine principle in man, as influencing the affections and the temper, the purposes and pursuits, and the various branches of that conduct upon which the laws of Christ place their control, are admirably portrayed, and persuasively enforced, by the excellent author of the following work ; and it is in the well-proportioned union of all these, that its truth and power consists ; for to unite the contemplative and the active life is the great concern of every one who nobly aims at **proving** the height and depth of true Christianity.

There are errors on both sides. The Ascetics and Mystics of every age have gone to one extreme ; whilst those who give so small a proportion of time to the duties of religious retirement, as to expend more vital energy in external exercises than is supplied by an internal converse with God, go to the other. Doubtless, along with errors of judgment, with superstition, and some degree of real fanaticism, we must allow to many who, in former ages, sought the highest degree of holiness and joy, in a contemplative abstraction, a sincere and an ardent piety. In all, however, the fire became dimmed, because it was not fanned by a change of atmosphere. It was not in human nature to have its affections held in that state of extreme tension which their notions of entire devotedness demanded ; and judging from the writings they have left, and their biographical records, their religious warfare acquired a very different character from that conflict to which we are summoned by our Lord and his Apostles. Their contest was not with sinful appetites only, but with innocent ones ; their following of Christ was not in the rough and arduous paths of outward service, but in the concentration of powerful and

pathetic meditations upon his cross and passion. The arena of spiritual conflict was in their case wholly within ; and a great part of the struggle consisted in resisting the languor of overdone attention, arresting the vagrancy of volatile thought, and rousing the ardour of feelings which had expended themselves by their very intensity. We have no class of persons, perhaps, among Protestants, who exactly answer to these ; but there are, probably, not a few whose religion, like theirs, is wholly of the defensive character, and who, in pious retirement, in prayers, in reading, in meditation, at orderly intervals, seek for a vigour of faith, a richness of spiritual enjoyment, a maturity of the Spirit's graces, which they will never find, if they slothfully and fearfully refuse to go beyond the every-day round of their own affairs in life, or the Sabbath course of public devotion, into those services which Christ, their neighbour, and the world require of them. The talent may be buried, not only in the earth, but in the church, and our own closet.

It is impossible, indeed, to conceive of Christianity aright, but as having reference, in every principle which it implants in the regenerate nature, and in every affection it kindles there, to a course of external manifestation and influence. "Ye are the lights of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." It has to do with all that concerns man ; it is "the kingdom of God,"—his rule within every heart, in all its principles, and his rule over the whole world, in all its business, its pleasures, its institutions, its professions, its laws, and its polity. There is much in all that tends to destroy, and will consume by the brightness of its full manifestation. "The wood, the hay, the stubble," shall go up before its fiery test ; and the "silver, gold, and precious stones" only shall abide it,—that which is useful, that which is suited to the high relations of man, and valuable for its influence upon society here, and upon eternity. But even these it claims to arrange in God's temple by its own authority, and to supply a new principle to the use which is made of them by man. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God ;" such is its demand upon the highest powers of the earth. If the five

talents of rank, opulence, or knowledge, be dispensed, they are all given in trust, and under the charge, “ Occupy till I come ;” and are to be employed in solemn and habitual remembrance of the monitory fact, that “ the Lord of these servants will come, and reckon with them.” The grand anti-selfish principle is found here. Power is not for him who possesses it : It is a deposit laid up in a few, for the benefit of all. Intellectual uselessness is a sin ; much more the application of the powers of reason and genius to pervert and destroy. Riches are a common grant deposited in the hands of stewards, to whom the honour and the felicity of dispensing are accorded ; but not the right to restrain and misapply. Rank is influence ; and that influence is claimed by religion. Even the pursuits of business, and manual labour, have their ennobling motives ; they are to be done on religious principles, “ heartily unto the Lord,” with “ singleness of heart,” with reference to his glory as the Lord of providence, and as forming that course of life through which our earthly trial is appointed to pass, the events of which are, by prayer and Christian prudence, as the instrumental causes, and by God’s blessing as the efficient cause, to work together for our good. How exalted and comprehensive the rule, “ Whatsoever ye do, in word and deed, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him !” Let us suppose this design of Christianity realized universally, its efficient influence expanded throughout society, and its intense principles of holiness and love secretly vivifying and spiritualizing all that is visible in that vast and varied course of action which we call life ; impossible as it is fully to realize that state of society in which we should then find ourselves,—the moral glory of the “ new heavens and the new earth,” which would thus be “ created,”—there is nothing in this state, which would only be the joint result of the contributions of all the individuals of which universal society is composed, which is not binding upon every individual professing subjection to Christ now ; nor is it more his duty, than it is his privilege and joy, to be now, what every individual in his own order will become, when the whole church shall be

decked with her garments of millennial beauty, when “ her people shall be all righteous, the branches of his planting, the work of his hands, that he may be glorified.”

Without this practical character upon our faith and our feeling, our meditations and our prayers, the force and fervour of them must evaporate, because our most abstracted intercourses with God are not designed to terminate in the emotions they excite. We live by faith ; it is that which reverses our sentence of condemnation, and opens to us the constant communication of life from God ; but we learn from St. Paul truly to understand the life of faith : “ The life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The power of appropriating faith is here most strongly marked. He truly knew in whom he had believed ; his personal interest in the death of Christ was joyfully ascertained,—“ who loved **ME**, and gave himself for **ME** ;” but from the mighty living energy thus supplied, he lived that life “ *in the flesh*, ” which, beyond that of any other man, was marked by ceaseless activity, and entire devotion to the church and the world ; a life of intense labour, of heroic suffering, of glorious success.

But the separation of what God has so joined together would be as fatal, on the other hand, and is, perhaps, the most common danger. In this age of religious zeal, of hearing sermons, of religious controversy, of the agency of a variety of important institutions for the reclamation of the poor from ignorance, vice, and misery, for the circulation of the Scriptures, and the support of Missions to the Heathen, the duties of abstraction, recollectedness, closet prayer, devotional reading of the Scriptures, meditation on the example of Christ, the cultivation of a subdued will, and the various branches of the Christian temper, and, as the source of all these, the maintenance of the vigour of our interior spiritual life, by the habitual actings of a claiming faith, need to be enforced upon us. Awful is the possibility, revealed to us by an authority from which there is no appeal, that we may have an Apostle’s knowledge, and a martyr’s zeal, and yet be but “ sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.” But there is a possibility of a

very different kind to him that believeth,—the power of attaining all that the New Testament enjoins as matter of personal experience, and of doing, from the fulness of the moral power which it inspires, all that it enjoins. Strange to the Gentile philosopher, “the scribe, the disputer of this world,” would many of the paradoxes in St. Paul’s writings appear;—“troubled on every side, yet not distressed;” “persecuted, but not forsaken;” “sorrowful, but always rejoicing;” “poor, but making many rich:” And equal paradoxes may now perplex the worldly mind in the exhibition of the true and inwardly-felt power of Christianity;—to be alone amidst multitudes; to be at once with man and with God; to see Him that is invisible; to be careful without care; to be hurried, and yet recollected; to “rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks.” But these are the possibilities which the Gospel opens to faith; and he only who attains them proves how rich and precious are its promises, and how complete are its triumphs, in man. Then are the religious affections fanned by courses of holy action; and these, again, give to that its vigour, and infuse into it its hallowed character: Then the soul finds its true centre in Christ, and abides in him, its wisdom, righteousness, and strength; and then, to vary a sentiment of Pascal, instead of receiving into our minds the true and genuine impression of earthly things, we strike a tincture of our own spirituality on all the objects we contemplate. We then transact the affairs of life and the visible church, as the angels in the vision of Jacob, in ascents and descents upon a ladder whose foot is indeed on earth, but whose top reaches unto heaven.

A LETTER

TO

WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.,

CONTAINING

STRICTURES ON HIS LATE PUBLICATION,

ENTITLED,

“ CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CAUSES, OBJECTS, AND
CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRESENT WAR.”

A LETTER

TO

WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

SIR,

WAR is an evil of such magnitude, involves so many scenes of individual and national calamity, and is so repulsive to every enlightened and liberal feeling, that those who either inflict it without cause, or continue it beyond the demands of necessity, equally deserve the execrations of mankind. As it is the "last reason," so it ought to be the "last resort," of Kings. No means should be left untried to preserve the relations of amity, so essential to the vital interests of all countries without exception; and no opportunity favourable to the return of peace, the best of human blessings, ought to pass by without regard. A power, originally injured, if it refuse reasonable and safe terms of conciliation, becomes equally guilty with the first aggressor, and changes its relations. What was at first an act of defensive resistance, then becomes an act of unjustifiable offensive encroachment.

Feeling the impression of these truths upon my own convictions, I should have gone with you to the full length of those pacific sentiments contained in your pamphlet, had they stood in the simple and commanding majesty of truth, wholly disconnected with the rancour of party and the perversions of prejudice. He must, however, have read your performance with little attention who does not perceive, that, whilst you contend for peace with foreign powers, you do

it in the spirit of domestic hostility ; and that your opinions are supported by facts exaggerated on the one part, and either falsely coloured, or wholly suppressed, on the other. These, Sir, I hope to prove in the sequel are not unfounded allegations ; and though I respect your virtues, and admire your talents, I shall not be deterred by either from pursuing the tract of fair, manly inquiry into the real merits of your political labours, though it may be at the expense of the exposure of the fallacy of your arguments, and the deficiency of your candour.

You have observed in your preface, that “ the honour of the nation is the honour of the people, and the disgrace of the nation their disgrace.” On this ground, Sir, I meet you. I feel interested in the honour of my country ; I should blush at her disgrace : And it is because I think that you have libelled her character ; because you have assimilated yourself to those hireling editors of the French and German papers, whose daily effort is to degrade her in the eyes of Europe ; and because the whole tendency of your pamphlet is to produce distrust and create alarm, and by paralysing the energies of the people in the present contest for all that renders political existence valuable, the independence of the country, is defeating its own object, the accomplishment of a speedy peace ; it is, Sir, I say, for these reasons that I become your opponent. Your name, it is true, may give a sanction to your opinions ; that advantage will be wholly in your own favour ; but the true merits of the question are not to be thus determined, nor truth confounded and driven from the field by the “ whistling of a name.”

It is not my intention to follow you, paragraph by paragraph ; for the objects you have embraced are not only multifarious, but without method. The principal argument, and the general tendency of the book only, will be noticed in the following strictures.

The origin of the war with France you pass slightly over ; and for that reason I shall not dwell long upon it. In fact, that subject has been discussed in so masterly a manner by the ablest of our senators and political writers, that the resus-

citation of it cannot now be further necessary, than as it may serve to elucidate the main principle of your pamphlet. Like other writers on the same side of the question, you argue against the policy of the war in all its stages, and against its longer continuance, from the defeat of its great objects, and the distressing situation into which we are now reduced. "All the motives which have been alleged in its justification, have long since ceased to operate; whether it was entered into for the preservation of the established order of Europe; to repress those persons in this country, who, in the early part of the French Revolution, disinterestedly rejoiced in the prospect of amelioration in France; to restore the house of Bourbon, because the Government with which we had to treat was unable to maintain the accustomed relations of peace; or to obtain indemnity for the past and security for the future." (Pages 4—6.) "We are now left without an ally, without an object, and without a cause." (Page 53.) As these arguments are continually urged by persons of your party with an air of triumph, and are calculated by their specious appearance to make some impression upon the unthinking, they merit on these accounts some examination.

Granting that the war has completely failed in its objects, as you would wish your readers to believe, it does not by fair logical deduction follow that it has been impolitic in its origin and progress, or that we should desire its immediate termination. Nothing can be so unfair as to argue from the failure of a project to its impolicy. It is an argument certainly unworthy of a sensible man to say, Because you have not succeeded you ought not to have attempted. And yet, in the case before us, is not this the amount of all that is here advanced? On this ground, all unsuccessful attempts to resist aggression may be censured. Should we even fail in the attempt to drive the Gallic legions from our own shores, some future political writer might arise and tell the world that the augmentation of our navy, the arming of the people, and every other military arrangement for our defence, were only the results of a drivelling policy, of weakness and infatuation.

But you, Sir, and your friends, have dealt much in political

prophesying ; your constant language is, “ These events were foretold, they happened as might have been expected.” Now, Sir, if the disastrous consequences of the war were so discernible, is it not a little surprising that they were not obvious to the minds of the most illustrious statesmen which ever directed the councils of any nation ? Why were they not convincingly plain to the majority of our nobles in the House of Lords ? Why did they not stand up in all their horrors to the majority of the representatives in the Lower House ? Why, if you suppose corruption and undue influence in the senate, did they not alarm the majority of thinking men in the nation ? But if these prospects into futurity were only opened by supernatural illumination, it is scarcely consistent to impute blame to those who had no more than the ordinary irradiations of unaided reason to guide their inquiries, or to direct their conduct.

Political predictions, however, like astrological ones, are entitled to all their credit by a lucky hit. Wide and multifarious conjecture must in something be realized ; and political prophecy, which predicts any thing and every thing, must in something be accomplished. But it is fortune-telling still ; and however, by the accidental credit it acquires, it may support the vanity of those who pretend to more than ordinary foresight, it can never be legitimately made either the foundation of practical policy, or the ground of political censure. Your mistake, Sir, lies in judging of the former measures of British statesmen by their present consequences. But what was deeply hidden in futurity to them at the time such measures were adopted, is now open to us in its causes, conduct, and effects. We have turned over that page in the book of fate which they were not permitted to touch. Is it then candid to decide upon their conduct, as though they possessed the attribute of omniscience ? In strict justice and common honesty, we ought to place ourselves in the same circumstances before we can decide upon the merit of their measures ; and suspend our censures, unless we can prove that those were either extravagant in their principles, or improbable in their execution.

Whatever objects you, Sir, may attribute to the war, no argument that has ever been offered has proved that it has had any other, than the resistance of French aggressions upon the independence of Europe. England at first entered reluctantly into the war, she remained neutral amongst conflicting powers, she disclaimed the idea of intermeddling with the internal arrangements of France ; and that step was not taken till after France had opened the navigation of the Scheldt, in contravention of the most sacred treaties, till she had unfolded her views of universal conquest, and proclaimed war against every state in the universe by her decree of the 19th of November, 1792 ; in which the “ national convention declare, in the name of the French nation, that they will grant fraternity and assistance to all those people who wish to procure liberty ; and that they charge the executive power to send orders to their Generals to give assistance to such people as have suffered, or are now suffering, in the cause of liberty.” England hesitated to join the contest, until her good faith to her allies, her national justice, and best interests, forced her into it. Lord Grenville demanded of France, to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandisement, and to confine herself within her own territories, without insulting other Governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights. What answer did France give to this reasonable demand ? She declared war against England, and thus proved to the world that she had formed other plans, and was actuated by other motives. This part of the controversy I know, Sir, is old ; but it is necessary to set our readers right in the main question between us.

As this was the original ground of the war, so it has been that of all the coalitions formed against France since that period. From the first to the last, the war against that power has been against her ambition and her encroachments, and, consequently, defensive. The independence of Europe has been the stake. The value of that independence was appreciated by the lucid mind of Mr. Pitt ; it was the rule of his conduct towards France. It is appreciated by us ; but we know its value now only by its loss. The experience of the

present moment proves how vitally it is connected with our interests. Let every Englishman lay his hand upon his breast, and say, of what value that independence is to him, now the object of the first revolutionists is realized, and Europe, at the feet of France, arms all its powers, and shuts up all its resources, against England. It must therefore follow, that as the principle of the war was just, so have the persevering efforts of England been politic. The object of the various coalitions has been the most glorious. They have all reflected the highest honour upon England. She has exhibited herself in the struggle which has convulsed half the globe, as the patroness of the weak, and the coadjutor of the powerful. She has lifted up her arm against universal usurpation, and has undeviatingly opposed the wild furor of revolutionary anarchy, and the less popular, but destructive, efforts of a military despotism. That she has partially failed in the conflict, is nothing to the purpose. Success is not honour, neither is defeat infamy. The contest has been noble ; and its failure may be attributed to causes which, with all submission to your superior illumination, human wisdom, generally speaking, could neither foresee, nor human power prevent.

In this conclusion we are completely at variance. You loudly condemn the policy of the war, because "it defeated its own purpose, and brought on the complete overthrow of that which it pretended to support." (Page 4.) "In the commencement of the French Revolution," you observe, "France was not military. Her first defenders were a raw, undisciplined soldiery. The attack of her enemies called out her energies, and she has overthrown the proudest Monarchs of Europe. Had she been suffered to establish, without interruption, her own form of government, such a result would not have taken place. It was, therefore, the attack upon France that converted that country into a nation of soldiers, and compelled her to have recourse for her defence to a government purely military." (Page 19.) But before these can be allowed as valid arguments against the policy of the war, you must prove that France has acted wholly on the defensive ; that she entertained no projects of dangerous ambi-

tion, and never designed to arm Europe against its lawful Sovereigns. You must prove these, Sir, as well as hint them. Arguing all along from these principles, you ought first to have supported your premises, and not, by assuming that as undoubted truth which thousands, both in England and on the Continent, would dispute with you, blind your readers, and hide the weakness of your cause. But you have not proved them ; you cannot prove them.

Every thing you have said of the French Revolution carries with it an avowal of approbation. You wish to impress it upon your readers, that there was nothing more in that event than an innocent and praiseworthy attempt to ameliorate the condition of France, by changing its government ; and that all the horrors of the Revolution and the military designs of France were produced by not “suffering her to establish her own form of government, and by the pressure of external force.” But this view of the subject is by no means correct. There was no interference in the internal affairs of France, until she herself provoked it by the madness of her own conduct towards other powers. Whatever effect the new doctrines broached in France might have upon the Sovereigns of Europe, they took no active measures against France, until she had violated the rights of treaties and of nations, refused the reasonable satisfaction demanded, and the avowal proposed by the Emperor Francis, “that the French should not consider themselves, from their Revolution, entitled to violate the rights of other powers.” France might have established her own form of government without interruption, had she not seized the property and dominions of other states ; she might have remained at peace, had she restrained her ambitious frenzy ; but she proclaimed war, because such aggressions were resisted by the surrounding nations. The rulers of France precipitated her into a war which they might have avoided. There was something sublime in the idea of contending against all the despots of Europe ; it suited the wild ravings of democratic madness ; they were uneasy until they had preached a crusade against every existing government in the civilized world.

That the “pressure of hostile force called forth the energies of the French nation,” and brought into action the most splendid military talents in her commanders, is an observation which allows of no difference of opinion ; but, if urged as a reason against the war with France, may be equally applied to wars in general. To the states of Europe no alternative was, however, left, but to seize the moment of early resistance to France, who had refused the most reasonable terms of pacification ; or calmly to see the rights of the weaker states invaded, and the completion of the arrangements of an universal plot, which was to spread anarchy, murder, and confiscation through the whole of their own dominions. France had filled every country with her emissaries ; the flame had begun to kindle ; delay in this case was destruction ; and not a Sovereign in Europe would have deserved to wear his crown, if, by a criminal inaction, he had waited until his army had been seduced, and his people armed against his government. You, Sir, it should seem, from various passages in your work, would have regarded the extension of the principles of the French Revolution as a desirable object ; and this in you is consistent enough, because you regard the atrocities of that political convulsion as arising rather from accidental circumstances, than from its principle ; but, for myself, believing firmly, from an attentive examination of the subject, that it was in its principle defective, and politically futile ; that every one of its horrors arose out of the nature of the thing, and from circumstances confined solely to the French nation ; that it was rather the offspring of metaphysical pride, Atheism, and the worst principles of the human heart, than of solid wisdom and public spirit ; I must conclude, that if the war has had no other effect than the prevention of the dire effects of revolutionary horrors, Europe is benefited by the war ; that the Sovereigns confederated against France made a wise choice in the side of the alternative they adopted ; and I had much rather read, in the page of history, the conquests of Buonaparte, than have perused the bloody records of the acts of sovereign mobs, the devastations of the guillotine, and the triumphs of political theory and religious

infidelity over the order of nations, and the sanctuaries of religion.

That this would have been the state of Europe, if no war had been entered upon, is more than possible ; it has the strongest probability. It was the design of the French leaders to revolutionize the world. Brissot, in his letter to his constituents, tells them, “ The determination is made to brave all Europe ; ” and proceeds, “ What did enlightened republicans wish before the 10th of August,—men who wished for liberty, not only for their own country, but for all Europe ? They believed that they could establish it by exciting the governed against the governors, in letting the people see the facility and advantages of such insurrections.” These views were not confined to Brissot and his party ; they were the solemn acts of the Government. On the 15th of December, 1792, the National Convention published a decree, in which they declare, that “ France will treat as enemies the people (*un peuple entier*) who, refusing or renouncing liberty and equality, are desirous of preserving, recalling, or entering into an accommodation with their Prince and privileged castes.” It should here be noticed, that on the very day the decree passed the Assembly, the executive council wrote to their agent, Chauvilin, in London, instructing him “ to disavow all hostile intentions on the part of France, and to proclaim her detestation of the idea of a war with England ; ” hereby marking the dangerous designs of the French Government, and the subtle hypocrisy with which it covered its diplomatic transactions.

What the consequences of this vigorous spirit of proselytism would have been on the Continent, had not active measures been resorted to, may be concluded from the rapid and alarming extent of such principles in England previous to the war. Even in England, under the mild and rational government with which she is favoured, where the person and property of every individual are respected, and where industry, even in the lowest classes, except under very peculiar circumstances of national depression, are ever rewarded with a comfortable subsistence ; in this country, Sir, those who “ disinterestedly rejoiced in the prospect of amelioration in France,” (page 4,) †

addressed congratulations to the National Convention, approbatory of the principles and process of the Revolution. One of those addresses expressed the hope, “that the same doctrines would be received, and the same example generally followed, in other countries;” whilst that of the London Corresponding Society, outstripping the rest, endeavoured to convince the Convention that the sentiments entertained by them “existed also in the hearts of all the free men of England.” “We enjoy,” say these patriots, “by anticipation, and with common hope, that epoch, not far distant, when the interests of Europe, and of mankind, shall invite the two nations to stretch out the hand of fraternity.” The objects of these societies were not unknown; the mobs which imbibed the sentiments they spread through the nation were ripe for every deed of mischief and of blood which had begun to mark the conduct of the sovereign people on the other side of the Channel; and the contagion was rapidly spreading, when it was arrested by those whom you term the “gloomy advocates of tyranny,” but who will be regarded by every man not ready to hazard every thing in support of a political theory, the saviours of their country, and the best friends of the best interests of man. But if the state of things was so alarming in England, as to call for all the vigour of the Government; on the Continent, supposing every state to have remained an inactive spectator of the affairs of France, revolutions upon revolutions in almost endless succession must have convulsed, and, it is probable, almost have exterminated, society. On the Continent the emissaries of anarchy had been more than usually busy; their principles had been secretly operating for a series of years; and the communication between the continental states, being by land only, was free and unrestrained. England might have shut herself out from France, even remaining neutral; but the other powers had no such advantages. The captivating promises of liberty and equality would operate upon them with a force proportioned to the real grievances of the people under the defective continental government; remaining at peace, they could not even have depended upon the military; and universal revolt, sanctioned

by French armies, which the love of plunder would have operated upon as powerfully as the “pressure of external force,” to which you alone ascribe the military exertions of France, would have shaken every establishment, and as completely have placed the Continent under French influence, as the victories of an organized dynasty.

It ought, likewise, to be remarked, that the ambitious designs of France are neither of a recent date, nor the result alone of the towering mind of the Chief who now seats himself on the throne of her ancient Monarchs. The French are naturally an ambitious people, and fond of military glory. It is as essentially the character of that nation, as the love of independence is the character of England, and commercial gain of Holland. The disposition of her military Emperor harmonizes with this prevailing national passion ; and to this, joined to his great successes, he owes that influence which has elevated him upon the ruins of the old monarchy and the late republic, to supreme government. But his schemes of conquest are not originals ; neither has he alone rendered them familiar to the hopes and wishes of the French people. France had the same designs of ambition in the subjugation of the Continent, in the early stage of the Revolution, as she has during the later periods of the war manifested and acted upon. The plan of aggrandisement, which has been since realized in the humbling of the northern powers, and the partitioning of Germany, was laid as early as the year 1793. Publicola Chaussard, Commissioner of the executive power, then said, “ It is the interest of France to raise herself to the rank of a first-rate power in Europe ; thus covering with her shield the second-rate powers, and protecting them against the boundless ambition of the northern empires. A war *ad internectionem* is declared between the republic and monarchies. Austria being once subdued, the Germanic body may become a colossus of federative republics, and change the system of the north.” For federative republics only substitute the Confederation of the Rhine, and you see the career Buonaparte has since followed precisely pointed out, and the object he has, after a long effort, at length accomplished, dis-

tinctly marked. Will you, then, tell us, that if France had not been opposed, she would not have accomplished those objects which she has attained in spite of the vast coalitions which have been formed against her? This conclusion is evidently absurd. Had the powers of the Continent remained at peace, she would have involved them in anarchy, and seized their dominions. Resistance held out the fairest probabilities of success in repressing her intentions; but though resistance has failed, the Continent is saved from civil disorder; though partitioned, it has regular Governments, and every change must be apparently for the better. Time, or the chances of the war, may throw the states into the hands of the lawful Princes, or the clashing of interests produce new and contrary alliances, which, by restoring the balance of power, will once more establish the independence of Europe.

I shall next proceed to examine the opinions you have given of the peace of Amiens, and the causes which led to the renewal of hostilities with France after that event.

This peace, notwithstanding the sacrifices which were made on the part of England to obtain it, has a large share of your approbation. The point is now, however, not worth disputing; but it is evident, from the most cursory review of the articles of that treaty, that, from the narrowness of its principle, it held out but very feeble hopes of permanent tranquillity, except to those who were ready to catch at every shadow which bore a pacific resemblance. The relations of the two powers were not accurately defined; no bar was put upon the ambition of France; and it was unattended with a treaty of commerce, an object of the first consequence in preserving a good understanding between the two powers. From these circumstances, it conveyed at the time, to a great number of thinking men in the nation, a low idea both of the sincerity of France, and of the ability of the Administration which made the arrangement. A treaty which only makes a kind of temporary provision for the interests of the day, neglects to look into futurity, and to fix, as far as possible, those mutual obligations which may give permanence to the relations of amity, is

obviously far worse than continued war. It is, in fact, no more than a truce. It gives a little breathing-time to the belligerents, who afterwards rush into hostility with new causes of irritation, and with more deadly rancour. That the treaty of Amiens was of this kind, subsequent events have fully proved. You have, it is true, detailed a number of causes which led to the renewal of the war, all of which, by your manner of stating them, and the method you have made use of to force them out of their connexion, tend to throw the odium upon Great Britain, and completely to exonerate France. But on this part of your performance, I must take the liberty to observe, that you have descended to the mean arts of a low polemic; and, by the evident want of fairness and candour, have exposed yourself to the severest censure. When you represent those persons who viewed that reconciliation with dissatisfaction, "as persons of mercenary views and exasperated feelings," and attribute the renewal of the war to "the clamours of French emigrants, and the bands of journalists and hireling writers, who fatten upon the calamities of a nation," (page 9,) you may enjoy the petty triumph of blackening your adversaries, and prejudging the question; but, Sir, the subject is not to be so disposed of; and as you have omitted to introduce those facts into your "Considerations" which would have enabled your readers to form a better judgment of that proceeding of the British Government, justice requires that the deficiency should be supplied.

The manner in which the definitive treaty itself was negotiated, augured nothing very favourable to the interests of this country. It was protracted, cold, and harassed by questions and discussions on subjects before settled in the preliminaries. After all it was little more than a transcript of the preliminary arrangements, and, as before noticed, instead of taking a wide and general basis, left equal room for the future assumptions of the enemy, and the complaints of Britain. The ambition of Buonaparte could not be even restrained until the definitive treaty was signed: Almost immediately after the signing of the preliminaries, "Louisiana was added to the power of France.

This was not all ; the ink was still wet, the wax was not yet cold, with which this treaty was concluded, when Piedmont, the bulwark of Italy, was annexed to the French empire. Then, seeing the indifference of the Government of Great Britain, the blow was struck by which the ancient ally of the British crown, the King of Sardinia, was driven from his seat. Let us look back into the progress of events. The treaty was made in the month of March ; it was ratified in May : In June, Piedmont was, by a formal decree, annexed to France ; in August the Consular Government made a grand sweep and disposal of the entire constitution of Germany, and of the powers in it. Not a day had elapsed, (he might challenge observation on the word,) not a single day had elapsed, without some act of insult, indignity, or attack upon Great Britain or her ancient allies since that time.”* But there were causes which operated more immediately upon the interests of this country, and produced suspicion in the Government and alarm in the people. Not only was Switzerland invaded, and her long-established liberties entombed in the yawning sepulchre of Gallic rapacity ; not only was Holland kept in a state of the most abject subjection, in opposition to the terms of the treaty, her navy at the disposal of France, and hostile preparations forming in her ports, which, whatever might be their ostensible object, were of a nature to excite the alarm of the very Ministry that had concluded the peace ; in France, British property had suffered the grossest violence, while justice in the French courts was denied to British subjects ; a number of vexatious and illiberal restrictions had been laid upon British commerce ; and designs of the blackest treachery against the internal peace of this country were discovered, happily in sufficient time to prevent their ripening into danger, but which did not, for that reason, less strikingly mark the character of the power with whom we had so lately interchanged the pledges of friendship.

Colonel Despard and his accomplices were, on the best authority, believed to be in the pay, and under the direction,

* Lord Grenville’s speech in the House of Lords.

of France.* The peace had scarcely been concluded, before a number of persons were landed in different parts of Great Britain and Ireland, under the name of Commercial Commissioners, but who were proved, on examination, French military officers. In their possession were found instructions from the French Ministers, directing to such inquiries as could have no relation to commerce, and could only be useful in a military view. The Addington Ministry were at length awakened by these events, and appeared to manifest some symptoms of repentance for having placed too much confidence in a Government which, whether in peace or war, cannot be too jealously suspected. The army and navy were increased ; mutual distrust received every day some new addition, and the communications respecting the British press and the island of Malta, led to those discussions which at length terminated in the complete breach of that hollow truce, flattered much when called the *peace* of Amiens.

Having just refreshed the memory of your readers by a rapid sketch of occurrences, with which, for certain reasons, you did not think proper to trouble them, I shall now attend more particularly to your remarks on this important subject. In page 11 you assert, “ that the disagreement between the two countries, which led to fresh hostilities, had no foundation in any unavoidable or substantial cause.” To prove this, you pass over rather lightly the evacuation of Egypt and Malta by the English, and the evacuation of Holland by the French, by just observing that these difficulties were in a course of removal, when M. Otto called the attention of Ministers to the French emigrants, and the abusive publications against the Government of France which daily issued from the press. This is a point on which you insist with much warmth, and perhaps for this reason, that, as you wish to make the grounds of the war appear to the public to be the most trifling, you would rest them upon the refusal of Government to keep a certain number of newspapers in awe, not by holding up the

* It was proved in evidence, that Colonel Despard himself avowed this connexion, and deferred one of his projects because “ he waited for news and money from France.”

lash of the Attorney-General in the ordinary way of prosecution for libels, for this would not satisfy the irritable Chief of the French nation, but by the exercise of a previous control over the press by the executive power. As this is a very disingenuous mode of changing the argument, so it is not a little inconsistent. Whilst at one time you stand forth as the champion of unbounded liberty, you here crouch to a tyrant, and obliquely become the apologist of an interference with the internal arrangements of other Governments in a case which most deeply affects the best interests of liberty, the freedom of the press. This freedom, more unequivocally than any thing beside, marks the difference between a free and an enslaved state. It is, when unfettered by illegal restraints, the engine of the greatest possible good to a free people ; but let it be touched by the wand of power, and it is converted into a mere passive instrument of tyranny ; it loses its energy, because free discussion is proscribed ; and it forfeits public confidence, because it is suspected. The language of truth will not then be spoken, except when it is dictated by interest ; and as interest is oftener, in the present state of things, connected with falsehood than with truth, it will oftener deceive than direct, and more frequently injure than benefit. Even truth conveyed through such a medium loses half its force.

I will, however, freely admit, with you, that the licentiousness of the press ought to be restrained ; that many publications of an indecent kind, and offensive to foreign Governments, have been issued. But why so tender of Buonaparte ? Why have you not complained that the best allies of England have been treated by the prints devoted to your party with the most vulgar abuse and unmanly rancour ; and that paragraphs in English newspapers have been so well suited to the palate and views of the enemy, that he has made use of them in place of original compositions, finding them more acrimonious against England, and more favourable to the cause of France, than even his own retained editors have had the courage or *modesty* to write ? You mention the subject of these offensive publications, it is true, as an historical fact necessary to the elucidation of your argument, and rather cloak your opinion

of the propriety of restraining them, under the mask of general observations ; though you certainly implicate the conduct of the British Government, as well as the individual writers engaged in the contest. But in this there is an evident attempt to mislead your readers. You have given part of an answer of Lord Hawkesbury to the representation of the French Minister ; but you might have found a dispatch of his Lordship's which would more forcibly have displayed the merits of the subject to your readers. With respect to the libels alleged to be published against the French Government, he expressed his “assurance that His Majesty could not, and never would, in consequence of any representation or menace from a foreign power, make any concessions which could, in the smallest degree, be dangerous to the liberty of the press, as secured by the constitution of the country ; that the constitution admitted of no previous restraints upon publications of any description ; but that there existed judicatures, wholly independent of the executive Government, capable of taking cognizance of such publications,” &c. This was an answer equally agreeable to justice and the independence of a free state. Under some circumstances you, too, would have avowed it. Had it been an answer from the French court to a British complaint, you would have written it in letters of gold ; you would have studded it with diamonds.

This mode of redress was as open to the first Consul as to His Britannic Majesty himself. “These judicatures,” it was observed by Lord H., in his reply, “might take cognizance, not only of libels against the Government and magistracy of this kingdom, but, as had been repeatedly experienced, of publications defamatory of those in whose hands the administration of foreign Governments was placed.” Here, then, was a legitimate mode of proceeding pointed out ; but it ill accorded with the summary process required by the man who, having extinguished every spark of liberty in France, and forced the presses of that country and other European states into his own service, was indignant that the British press alone dared to investigate his character, to criticise his Government, and to warn the world of the dangerous maxims of his policy.

In page 98 you demand, with an air of lofty defiance, "At what period, since the Revolution, has the French Government proposed to us to relinquish any of our liberties and laws?" I answer, At this. That Government wished the British press to be controlled by the executive, contrary to the constitution. Nothing it might deem offensive was to be published. Had this been admitted, would the system of interference have terminated here? Buonaparte complained of the speeches in Parliament, as well as libellous newspapers: Would you, Sir, have been ready to have conceded the freedom of speech in the senate, as well as the liberty of the press? I believe not. Strong as your bias is towards France, unbounded as your confidence appears to be in her military Chief, I believe you would not. A stand must, then, have been made somewhere; and it was more honourable, as well as more effectual, to resist the first attempt upon our internal arrangements and established laws.

With respect to the French emigrants, it is only necessary to quote the reply of the British Government on that subject: "It was affirmed, that the greater part of the persons alluded to by the French Government were living in retirement; and that there was no reason whatever to suppose that, since the conclusion of peace, they had availed themselves of their residence in England to promote designs injurious to the Government of France."

On the share which the evacuation of Malta had in producing a recommencement of hostilities, you are rather inconsistent. In the paragraphs in your pamphlet I have been just animadverting upon, you would attribute this event to the libels of the British press; but, in page 100, you say, "We might have continued at peace in 1803, if we would evacuate Malta, as we agreed to do by the treaty of Amiens." Passing over this apparent contradiction, I must observe, that the view you have given of this subject, like the former, is far from being fair or accurate. You seem to encourage the notions assiduously spread by a party at that time, that the refusal to evacuate that island was an act of faithlessness on the part of the British Ministry; and that the peace was broken for

the sake of a possession uninteresting to Britain. But the conduct of the Addington Administration, I think, was, in this respect, free from blame. That they were sincere in making the peace, I believe has been allowed by all parties; and it may, therefore, be fairly concluded, that they sincerely intended to fulfil all its articles. Arrangements were entered into for the purpose of evacuating Malta, agreeable to the treaty. Difficulties occurred to prolong that measure; but still there was no appearance of insincerity. Before these could be removed, France herself had made infractions on the treaty, and, as before noticed, began to pursue a conduct, and to manifest a disposition, which augured a speedy rupture between the two countries. Malta was, therefore, retained, till the French Government should enter into a new arrangement. The treaty was not literally fulfilled; but this is a gross view of a subject, when disposed into the form of a charge; for what may not at first sight appear just, will be often found so upon explanation. The terms of a treaty are not binding only upon one party: They hold both; and when the conduct of one party is in direct opposition either to the express terms of an agreement, or to its evident spirit, so as to nullify its intention, the other is justly exonerated from the obligation.

With respect to the importance of Malta, it may be said, that, considering only the intrinsic value of that island, it would have been most ridiculous to make that, simply considered, the ground of war. But though on the face of the litigation Malta occupied the most prominent place, the contest was rather between the ambition of France and the safety of our eastern possessions. The possession of Egypt, it is notorious, even from the confession of Buonaparte himself, was an object nearest to his heart. The preservation of our India possessions was one of the great objects for dispossessing the French of that station before the peace of Amiens; and it was natural that what we had achieved by a career of honourable victories, should be guaranteed by that treaty. This was done. The eighth article stipulated, "that the territories," &c., "of the Sublime Porte were to be maintained in their

integrity." But Buonaparte, after the treaty of Amiens, did not abandon his designs upon Egypt, nor manifest any intention to submit to the restraint of its provisions. The report of Sebastiani, ostensibly a commercial agent, but in reality a military spy, disclosed the fact that such intentions were still entertained ; and it was placed beyond a doubt by the conversation of the first Consul with Lord Whitworth, while the negotiations were still pending. He concluded his observations, on the subject of Egypt, with observing, whatever might be his desire to have it as a colony, he did not think it worth the risk of a war, since sooner or later Egypt would belong to France, either by the falling to pieces of the Turkish empire, or by some arrangement with the Porte. Under such circumstances was Malta to be surrendered ! To Buonaparte, Malta could be of no value, but as aiding his designs on Egypt and India ; to us it was of no value, but as it afforded security to both. In proportion, therefore, as the anxiety of France respecting Malta became more urgent, we had additional motives for retaining it ; and when the first Consul declared he would rather see us in possession of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine than that island, it was time for Britain to determine to keep it for ever.

This indifference with respect to Malta and Egypt is not a little singular in you, who have held up a participation in the East India trade to the town of Liverpool as an object of petition to Parliament, and have endeavoured to acquire a degree of popularity by that proceeding. At the last election an attempt was made to prop up your sinking cause by connecting your name with that hope, and by hinting to the electors that you would use every exertion to open to them that valuable channel of commerce. The placards on the walls, inscribed, " Roscoe and the East India trade," met the eye in every direction. For the interest you have at any time taken in the welfare of your native place, you are entitled to its thanks ; but it is strange that you should censure the British Government for their precaution in checking the designs of the enemy in that quarter of the globe to which you directed the attention of your townsmen to find an indemnity

for the dilapidated state of their commerce, produced by the abolition of the slave trade. But perhaps in this, as well as other instances, you have an unbounded confidence in the honour, the integrity, and the moderate desires of the Emperor of the French. You have, however, been exceeded in the sacrifices you would have offered at the shrine of the ambition of Buonaparte, in order to maintain the peace of Amiens : Earl Stanhope would not only have evacuated Malta and Egypt ; he would have given to France the islands of Guernsey and Jersey !

From a review of these circumstances, it must be left to our readers to determine how far your observation is just, that “the disagreement of the two countries, which soon afterwards led to fresh hostilities, had no foundation in any unavoidable or substantial cause.” (Page 11.) Every impartial man, I am persuaded, will come to a very opposite conclusion. But be this as it may, no man, who is not disposed to follow a party to its last dregs, can allow the intemperate abuse you have lavished upon those who were either dissatisfied with the peace of Amiens, or sanctioned a new declaration of war against the enemy. That such were merely “hireling writers, placemen, pensioners, or contractors,” is either a scurrilous libel, or an intentional falsehood. With respect to the peace of Amiens, the opinions of men were much divided, not only in the nation, but in the Parliament. It was applauded by Mr. Pitt, and many of the members of his Administration ; and as loudly condemned by those who formed conspicuous parts of that under the banners of which you ranged, and whose measures you supported during the period of your ephemeral senatorial existence. Great as the joy was which the tidings of peace produced, it was soon followed by a change of sentiment, when the encroachments of France could be no longer hid. You impute this change to the efforts of hireling journalists ; but you seem to forget that these journalists were chiefly in opposition to the Ministry of that day, and could not, therefore, be in the pay of the Treasury. If there were hireling advocates for war, were there not also hireling clamourers for peace ? If there were those who painted

the deformities of Buonaparte, were there not also those who, as in the present day, trumpeted his virtues? You call them alarmists; and this, it is true, is an alarming word; but what, Sir, is an alarmist? If he be one who, from the watch-tower of observation, discovers hostile movements, and dangerous designs on the part of the enemy, and faithfully rouses his country to a sense of danger, in opposition to the attempt of those whose feminine minds ever soothe into compliance, and lull into security, an alarmist is an appellation of which no patriot ought to be ashamed; but if you regard the persons who called upon the energy and spirit of the British nation at that time to resist the assumptions of France as instigating war because they had an interest in it, and as agitating the public with false and groundless alarms, you implicate not only French emigrants and hireling writers, but also the most distinguished patriots and statesmen, of almost every political party, that ever adorned a country by their virtues, or honoured a senate by their talents. To prove this it is only necessary to refer the readers to the debates in Parliament, May 23d, 1803, upon His Majesty's message to the House, announcing the rupture between the two countries. What were the majorities in favour of the measures of the British Government? In the House of Lords, contents, 142; non-contents, 10! In the Commons, for the address, 398; against it, 67! Had the emigrants, the journalists, the pensioners, deceived the two Houses of Parliament also? You outrage, Sir, the understanding of your readers.

I shall conclude these observations with the following extract from a speech delivered on that occasion by Earl Moira, whom, from his political opinions, you cannot object to as an impartial evidence: "Our jealousy and alarm were excited by that incorrigible spirit of encroachment and ambition which not only the first Consul, but, in fact, all the persons connected with the Government of France, had for some time manifested; and even if Malta were in our hands in perpetuity, we should not sit down contented, until some further security should be obtained: Of this the nation ought to beware. The fact was, that, from the present state of this

country, there was no option: Either the attempt to reduce that power must be made, or the nation must fall down to the most abject and degrading submission. The main object of the war, if it be either popular, or politic, must be to restrain the arrogance, to reduce the preponderance, of the French Government; and until that object be attained, the war should not be abandoned; until France should not be capable of endangering our existence, whatever might be the disposition of her Government to injure us." His Lordship concluded by observing, that, "if this country were to be engaged in war, it ought to receive a confident assurance that it did not go into it merely for colonial pursuits for petty contests, but for great national interests."

Upon the whole, when we reflect upon the pacific character of the Ministry that concluded the peace of Amiens, and the sincerity that they manifested, immediately after the peace, to fulfil its conditions, it is not to be doubted that if they were alarmed, there was cause of alarm; and as their political existence extended long enough to enter upon a new war, it may be inferred, from their characteristic disposition, that they were forced into it by the most pressing causes,—the aggressions of the enemy, and the danger of the country. In your reflections on this breach of amity, you, however, think that at the moment the Addington Administration entered upon the war, the fairest opportunity was held out to the country, not only of peace, but of aggrandizement! You found this opinion on the conversation of Buonaparte with the British Ambassador. At that interview "he said, that if he had not felt the enmity of the British Government on every occasion since the peace of Amiens, there would have been nothing that he would not have done to prove his desire to conciliate; *participation in indemnities*, as well as influence on the Continent; *treaties of commerce*; in short, any thing that would have given satisfaction, and testified his friendship." From these fair promises of the first Consul, to the truth of which you give as grave an assent as to a mathematical demonstration, you as gravely infer, "If peace had been the object of the British Ministry, here was the ground-work of it;

if security, here was the season for finding it; if aggrandizement, this was the opportunity. In an arrangement upon these grounds this country would have made no sacrifices," &c. (Page 23.) Much, Sir, as I am astonished at your credulity, I am more so at this evident display of a want of consistent principle.

In citing this conversation, you have been guilty of a kind of literary deception, which is not unfrequently practised. Whilst you have exhibited the tempting offers of "participation in indemnities," and "treaties of commerce," in Italic characters, to catch the eyes and engage the unusual attention of your readers, that sentence which is to be considered as the key of the whole of this part of the conversation, stands embodied in plain Roman, deprived of this supplemental aid to force it into notice. As I have got now into the habit of supplying your omissions, I take the same liberty on this occasion. "Two such countries," observes the Consul, "by a proper understanding, might govern the world." This is the sentence which explains the whole. The language is too plain to be mistaken. "Join your fleet to my army, assist in the accomplishment of my designs against Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Germany, against all the rest of the world, and you shall share the spoils, you shall participate in indemnities." This was indeed, Sir, an opportunity for aggrandizement. If the British Ministry had consented to become the tools of Buonaparte's ambition, they might have had indemnities and treaties of commerce. The ground of the hatred of Buonaparte to England is, because she is the only power which stands between him and universal dominion. Had she been silent on the subject of his encroachments, he would have continued at peace; but had she co-operated, he would have yielded any thing to testify his friendship. And yet you observe that "in an arrangement on these grounds, the country would have made no sacrifices." What, would the country have made no sacrifices in becoming the accomplice of a public robber, in departing from the tract of fair manly resistance to the encroachments of universal despotism, and in yielding the energies, given her by Providence for her own

defence, into the hands of the scourge of nations, the “tyrant of the Continent ?” I profess, Sir, that when I read this part of your book, it was with difficulty that I could persuade myself that you were in earnest. “But what,” you ask, “was the answer of the British Ministry? A total silence on those most interesting and important topics.” And what answer did they deserve, but a contemptuous silence? Even to have listened for a moment to such an infamous proposal would of itself have been sufficient ground of impeachment.

The disclosure of the views and wishes of the French Government in this conversation, was amongst the foremost of those causes which excited the spirit of the English nation against France, and which produced a vigorous co-operation with the Government of the country after the declaration of war. You seem to attribute this wholly to the national affront contained in the French *exposé*, “that England alone could not contend with France.” Had this been the case, as an Englishman, I should have been proud of the reflection, as it marked a delicate sense of honour, and proved that commercial pursuits had not so changed the national character, as to render it insensible to military glory. But this idle vaunt was not the principal cause of exciting the spirit which led to so determined a resolution on the part of the people. The conduct of the French ruler, from the signing of the preliminaries of the peace to the renewal of hostilities, all served to mark the real character of the enemy, and to impress the nation that its safety alone consisted in pursuing the strongest and most vigorous measures. But when, after the declaration of war, an invasion was threatened, the character of this country was placed in its most imposing light. You, Sir, have treated this subject rather lightly; but, for myself, I esteem it glorious to have lived in an age, when the generous youth of Britain rallied round their “hearts and their altars;” when party itself was absorbed in the common cause of the country; and when it was proved, in the most unequivocal manner, in what estimation the constitution and independence of Great Britain was held by its inhabitants, by the sacrifices they then made to defend them. That this spirit was ridiculed and depressed

by the coldness, the insults, and the theoretical war-systems of a late Administration, is a subject of deep regret, as it may serve to enervate the future energies of the people, when called again to associate for the common defence of the liberties of their civil establishment, and the honourable rewards of their industry. But the principle, though depressed, still exists, and will, I trust, be found as equal to the refusal of a peace which would sacrifice the interests of the country, as to resist the invasion which would endanger its existence.

Having dismissed the peace of Amiens, you take a rapid survey of the events which almost immediately followed the renewal of the war; the change of Ministry, the conduct of the continental war, which terminated so fatally by the battle of Austerlitz, and the death and character of Mr. Pitt. Few as the pages are which you have devoted to these subjects, they are superfluous additions which have little relation to the scope of your pamphlet. Apparently glad of the opportunity of impugning the ability of Mr. Pitt, in conducting his own measures, as well as his wisdom in adopting them, you have said, "that if the object of that coalition had been laudable, the misconduct and folly of those who gave rise to the alliance were such as must, in the eyes of impartial posterity, brand them with indelible disgrace." (Page 31.) What the opinion of our posterity will be on this subject, is not, I believe, known either to you or me; it is probable that there will be as great a variety of opinions on the political questions of the age in which we have lived, at the end of a century, as at present. In the case before us, that there is "folly and misconduct" to be charged somewhere, the results of that unfortunate campaign have rendered too evident to be denied; but that they are to be attributed chiefly to Mr. Pitt and his friends in administration, is an inference which, unless your impartiality has been somewhat partialized, you would not so hastily have reached. "This folly and misconduct," in your opinion, consisted in not binding the King of Prussia by the alliance, and in the "blind confidence that the accession of Russia would ensure the co-operation of Prussia." This co-operation was certainly highly to be desired, and would in all probability

have decided the contest in favour of the allied powers ; the confidence felt in the accession of Prussia to the common cause was certainly supported by the conviction, that the interests of that power dictated that line of conduct, and therefore not a blind confidence. But, Sir, it was not absolutely necessary to the success of the coalition that Prussia should become one of the parties ; neither does it appear that unlimited confidence was placed in her friendship. Austria and Russia, if their forces had been united, would have been equal to the contest ; nor is it to be supposed that Mr. Pitt ever intended that they should engage separately. That impolicy neither resulted from the plan of the campaign, nor necessarily followed the rapid movements of the French. The Austrian force might have retreated until it had met the Russians ; and this movement, though it would have exposed the Austrian territory, was infinitely to be preferred to the course that was taken. In fact, the principal blame of that affair appears to rest with the court of Vienna. The General it appointed was either a traitor, or unequal to his appointment, or the court itself guilty of a temerity bordering upon madness. All this, you say, was foreseen, and therefore might have been avoided ; but, Sir, it is easy to frame predictions when the events are past.

But were the conduct of Great Britain as blamable as you assert, it would prove nothing against the principle of the war or of the coalition. The truce of Amiens had already shown, that, whether in peace or war, the enemy not only pursued a course of spoliation on the Continent, but a system of hostility against the commerce, the government, and every interest of this country. The most moderate men of every party, the Addingtons who made the peace, even Whigs themselves, joined in the sentiment, “ Unless France be humbled, Britain is unsafe : Either the attempt to reduce that power must be made, or the nation must fall down to the most abject and degrading submission.” This was the voice of the Parliament and of the nation ; and although the failure of the attempt added to its difficulties, it has left “ to impartial posterity to admire that noble love of independence which resisted a successful despotism with so much energy, and that firm spirit

which remained unbroken under the pressure of multiplied disappointments and calamities."

The mismanagement of the allies, which you obliquely attribute to Mr. Pitt, whose ever-to-be-lamented death succeeded the battle of Austerlitz, gives you an opportunity of uttering a laboured and malignant philippic against the memory of that distinguished statesman. It would be pitiful to follow you into the detail of the political vices you attribute to his character. His merits can receive no addition from the panegyric of my pen, nor have they suffered any detraction from the obloquy of yours. The richest monument of the son of Chatham is in the heart of his country, which still cherishes the most grateful remembrance of the wisdom and policy of his administration, the uprightness of his conduct, and the ardour of his patriotism. Very different, however, are your feelings; and perhaps you have furnished the reason in page 36. Speaking of the French Revolution, you observe, "It was Mr. Pitt's first misfortune to be insensible to the grandeur of so glorious a struggle; his second, to miscalculate its consequences. The first act of France was to hold out her emancipated hands to the free states of England and America; but the coldness of the Minister soon convinced her that in this Government she was not to expect a friend." *Hinc iræ, hinc lachrymæ.* This was the unpardonable sin of Mr. Pitt; for this he was loaded, by a violent party, with every kind of abuse whilst living; and for this, malice still barks over his ashes. But, Sir, Mr. Pitt was not a theoretical politician; his eye was too strong to be dazzled by the false glare with which the novelty of French principles, and the vivid eloquence with which they were adorned, encircled the Revolution. "The emancipated hands of France" were stretched out to England and America; but neither the sober mind of Washington, though President of a republic, nor of Pitt, though Prime Minister in a nation enjoying a greater portion of true liberty than any other on earth, regarded the invitation to befriend the cause of Gallic republicanism. France "held out her emancipated hands;" but they were ensanguined with murder, and blackened with violence. Whilst she "held

out her hands" to Britain, (I suppose you mean for help,) she was secretly employing them in an attempt to pull down our constitution and laws, and in sowing the seeds of discord and rebellion in every state within the reach of her influence. "A limited monarchy" did not satisfy those who fomented the first breach of the social order in France. Those who assumed the direction of affairs after the humiliation of Louis, for the most part, were the advocates of the most levelling democracy ; and there is good evidence to be produced that they themselves provoked external hostilities and domestic massacres, that they might with a better grace murder their Monarch, and rear the fabric of their idolatry upon the ruins of their country. These views were not latent ; they discovered themselves in almost every act of the French reformers from the beginning ; they were obvious to the discerning eye of Mr. Pitt. Would you have wished him to make England a party in a civil war ? to aid a Parisian mob against its Sovereign ? to have declared war against Germany, Prussia, and the other confederates, because they had declared war against France ? and to have participated with France in her crimes, that she might become a sharer in the spoils ? This is another instance of your inconsistency. To interfere in the internal arrangements of France in favour of royalty, was a crime too great for forgiveness ; but if that interference had been in favour of a factitious liberty, it would have been a noble sensibility "to the grandeur of so glorious a struggle !" But to the grandeur and glory of this struggle Mr. Pitt was insensible ; and so, I believe, was every man in the country who was not either an idiot too weak to reason, or a philosopher reasoning himself out of the region of common sense ; a partisan making use of it as a convenient instrument to blow up the flame of dissension, or a leveller who only waited the watch-word of sedition to give him the property of his neighbour.

Your reflections on the ill success of Mr. Pitt's policy, which follow, I have anticipated in the former part of this letter ; and shall therefore only notice the observation, that "the principle which carried the French nation through all

her difficulties was the determination of the people to rally round the existing Government, whatever that Government might be." In that respect the French are to be applauded ; nor shall I object in this instance to your indulging yourself in your favourite bias : But the observation affords just occasion of admonition to you, and others of the same party ; and it may be asked, whether you, as Englishmen, have done that which you praise in Frenchmen ? The Ministry of this country is its Government for the time being. But, Sir, have you rallied round it ? Have you, even in cases where your private convictions on political measures would have suffered it, endeavoured to give the existing Ministry the respect and confidence of the country ? Have you been willing to praise, and reluctant to condemn ? Have you, amidst the dangers of your country, hushed personal invectives and party clamours, and absorbed these unmanly partialities in the great considerations connected with the welfare of the empire ? Have you never endeavoured to frustrate plans of national policy, that the odium of the failure might rest with your opponents, and artfully endeavoured to excite the hopes or the fears of the people to produce a change of sentiment, in order to effect a change of Administration ? If I may be allowed to answer these inquiries myself, I will say, that, taking your party in the aggregate, almost every effort of theirs, out of place, has tended to discourage the people of this country, and to infuse vigour into their enemies. Your pamphlet, Sir, has this tendency at home, though it is not likely to find its way abroad ; and the conduct of your friends in opposition is sufficiently applicable. If they speak of Russia, it is in terms calculated to give permanence to the estrangement of that power from England ; if of the Danish expedition, every thing that is advanced tends to strengthen the bonds of northern confederacy ; if of France, it is with a respect that might impress its Government that in England a powerful party is devoted to its interest ; if of the country, the colouring is so dark, that every hostile power must be encouraged to withhold that peace from us which they demand from our own Government, in hope of our entire humiliation ; and if of Ireland,

every topic is chosen which is calculated to keep alive the flame the Opposition themselves have kindled ; to encourage the enemy to invade, and the Irish to receive him. For the sake of consistency, if not of patriotism, if you praise the French for rallying round their Government, whatever it might be, when their country was in danger, go, Sir, and imitate the example. I am very far from thinking that an Opposition is not highly useful and necessary in this free country, or that the liberty of speech ought to be restrained. Were there even no party ends to serve, no projects of ambition to gratify, the difference of opinion always found in man would on many subjects of policy unavoidably create an Opposition ; but the present party in the House distinguished by that name (I except some individuals) would be entitled to more respect, and would more essentially serve the interests of the country, if their pride were less assuming, their desire of place less obvious, and their contempt of their opponents restrained within narrower limits of modesty ; if, burying their party quarrels, they would recollect that the state is in danger, and that their public duty demands the union of all that is great, wise, and patriotic in the nation.

After noticing the change of Ministry consequent on the death of Mr. Pitt, you proceed to give an historical narrative of the negotiations opened with France by the new Ministers, which, according to your statement, took its rise from the refusal of Mr. Fox to become a party in a plot to assassinate the Chief of the French Government. Admiring, as you do, the principles and politics of that gentleman, to have taken an opportunity of paying a tribute of respect to his memory as a man, or his talents as a senator, would have been an effort of friendship or of admiration which could have given offence to none, however they might differ from your opinions. But, Sir, had I, who certainly do not carry my admiration of Charles Fox as far as yourself, been disposed to have panegyrised his character, I could have selected many greater virtues from his heart than that circumstance called into action. It was surely but little to say that his heart recoiled at a murderous proposal ; it was little to prove in favour of your friend that he was not

an assassin. A foreigner reading your book, if unacquainted with the character of the English nation, might very naturally infer that there is a hideous deficiency of the great principles of justice and humanity in the country, when a political writer is driven to the extremity of praising a state Officer, because of his refusal to become an accomplice in a murder! The seriousness with which you treat this subject is indeed throughout ridiculous. It is not enough that this refusal should stand for the index of Mr. Fox's virtues as a man, it must also be alleged as a proof of the soundness of his principles as a politician. "He had the courage and virtue to bring forwards into public life, and to exemplify in the most striking manner, one of the most important maxims of morality, that it is never expedient to do evil in the hope of producing an eventual good." (Page 44.) To the truth of this axiom I give, with you, the strongest assent; but I confess that I am at a loss to discover that the conduct of Mr. Fox in this instance illustrated it in "the most striking manner;" or that it required any effort of "courage" to bring this axiom into "public life" in a country and Government like our own. But, Sir, the manner in which you have stated this anecdote only adds another proof to the many you have already afforded, of the unnatural disposition you have shown to degrade your country, and to impeach the characters of all who have pursued a policy different from that which you could approve. Why, if such a disposition does not exist in your bosom, should you wish to represent this maxim of political morality as buried in obscurity till Mr. Fox introduced it into public life? Why hint that the British Government had for so long a time departed from the most obvious principle of justice, that it required an extraordinary exertion of courage on the part of a Secretary of State, to assert and act upon it? Why intimate that this "virtue and courage" existed only in a Whig and in a Whig Ministry? that neither Mr. Pitt and his friends in office formerly possessed them? and insinuate that the persons now in office, had the same proposal been made to them as to Mr. Fox, would have acted the part of murderers and assassins? (See page 77.) It was thought by impartial men a violent

stretch of modesty for the Opposition to assume “ all the talent of the country ;” but you have carried them still farther, you have given them all the virtue.

The negotiation to which this display of negative virtue on the part of Mr. Fox gave rise, is of great importance. It served to mark, in the strongest manner, the character of the enemy, and the insecurity of Great Britain, whilst he retains his immense superiority over the Continent. You have gone into an historical detail of this transaction, though not exactly with the fidelity which, according to general opinion, an historian ought to possess. As far as a proper respect to your friends who conducted that affair would allow, you have endeavoured to give a colouring to those communications in favour of France, and against the decision of your country ; but, after all your attempts, the pages in your pamphlet which you have employed on this subject, stand as a complete refutation of the main principle you have endeavoured to establish, that the French Government has been uniformly disposed to conclude peace with this country upon safe and honourable terms. The Pitt Administration had repeatedly declared that a secure peace could not be made with France. A party in the nation who had made some proselytes through the disasters of the war, and the disappointment of their former hopes, were not satisfied with this declaration. The Addington party was then brought in, and made a peace, which they found it impossible to preserve. “ We are at war,” said the pacific Addington himself, “ because we cannot be at peace.” The advocates for the continuance of peace were silent until the destruction of the third coalition raised the desire and excited the cry for peace again. Mr. Fox was then in office, who, from the first, had opposed the war, and who, throughout all its stages, had called aloud for its termination. Mr. Fox made the trial ; and after his death the negotiations were continued by his friends ; and the conclusion to which they brought the whole was, that the principle asserted by Mr. Pitt and his friends, and which they had at different times so violently opposed, was strictly true, that “ no secure peace could be made with France.” They inform the people, “ that all their

dearest interests are at stake; that no sacrifices they can be called to make can be compared to the certain disgrace and ruin of yielding to the injurious pretensions of the enemy." Even you, Sir, make this reflection upon the unfavourable result of these endeavours to restore peace, "that when a negotiation, begun by Mr. Fox, and the successful result of which was stated by him in his last moments to be one of the two great objects for which he was most anxiously solicitous; when such a negotiation fails, under the conduct of his surviving coadjutors and friends, who declare to the country, that the restoration of the general tranquillity was retarded only by the injustice and ambition of the enemy, all expectation of peace is abandoned, and nothing appears to remain for the people, but to unite their endeavours in accomplishing the destruction of an implacable foe."

But, notwithstanding this, we are not allowed to rest the matter here, because that would implicate the character of France to a greater extent than you wish to impress upon the public mind. In page 56 you allow, that because peace could not be made with France on terms satisfactory to Russia, our good faith to our ally might be a sufficient cause of hostility, "inasmuch as no sacrifices we can ever be called to make are too great for maintaining the character of the nation for honour and integrity clear and unimpeached;" but you will not allow us this without a drawback. "This," you observe, "is rather to be attributed to the unfortunate effects of our having formed such an alliance, and to the necessity of adhering to it, than to any misconduct on the part of France." (Page 7.) If to use those arts of which French statesmen are complete masters, to beguile the Ambassadors of other powers, or by political finesse to effect a separate peace between Russia and England only for the purpose of making more advantageous arrangements for France, were the only charges to be alleged against the Goverment of that country, the general laws of diplomatic transactions would, I believe, exculpate it from blame; this liberty being, by a kind of mutual consent, allowed to address and intrigue in all parties: But if there were no real sincerity on the part of the French Government to make a

peace honourable to all the parties concerned, according to its own professions ; and if France wished for a peace only to tie up the hands of other Governments, whilst she herself intended to be left at liberty to pursue her own plans of aggrandizement, then France in this affair is to be charged with the grossest misconduct. A peace of this kind Buonaparte has always been willing to make ; such a peace he would have made in 1806 ; but there is no evidence to be produced from any part of his conduct that he has been willing to make a treaty which would prevent him from making aggressions on the dominions of other states. He has manifested no inclination to cease from his ambitious projects, to confine himself within the bounds of his present conquests, and to turn his attention to the internal improvement of his dominions. When a change of Ministry placed the reins of Government in the hands of the passive Addington party, he concluded an indefinite peace ; and, agreeably to his intentions, continued his aggressions with as much ardour as ever. When that conduct was resisted, the peace was broken. The change of Ministry which followed the death of Mr. Pitt afforded another opportunity to negotiate on similar terms. The new Administration was composed and supported by a number of characters who had uniformly been pacifically disposed to France, who had praised the virtues, and exculpated the crimes, of that Government. On this Ministry France presumed as more suited to her purposes than any other that had had the direction of the British councils since the Revolution. The affair of the assassin afforded an opportunity to try its temper, and the experiment was made. The negotiation was entered upon on the basis of the *uti possidetis*, or state of actual possession ; but the English diplomacy was not equal to the French. This basis was evidently allowed by the French Minister, but it was only verbally allowed, and that in terms somewhat equivocal. This was the snare into which the British Ministers were first led. The basis ought to have been expressed in writing ; but perhaps an overweening confidence in the good faith of France might be the inducement to accept the mere verbal professions of the French Minister ! This basis you,

however, assert was not the original one on which the negotiation commenced : “ It appears that up to the 4th of June, the principle of the state of actual possession had neither been assented to, nor even proposed by either parties.” (See pages 48, 49.) In this you are certainly in an error ; and you have only resorted to the tergiversation of the French Minister, who, availing himself of his having only given a verbal assent to this principle, proceeded to deny his former professions, and to change the basis. That Mr. Fox himself entered upon the negotiation on this ground, is evident from his dispatch to Earl Yarmouth, dated June 26th, which has this passage : “ I am very happy to learn that M. Talleyrand acknowledges your accounts of former conversations to be accurately correct ; but when he does acknowledge this, I have no conception on what ground he can recede from what he said so distinctly to your Lordship before, upon the subject of Sicily. ‘ You are in possession of it ; we ask nothing from you,’ are words that made the more impression on me, because those contained in the latter clause of the sentence had been used by his Excellency in one of his letters to me. It was on the faith of the *uti possidetis* being to be strictly observed as the basis, and particularly Sicily, on which satisfaction had been given to your Lordship, that His Majesty was induced to authorize your Lordship to hold further conferences with M. Talleyrand. Any tergiversation or cavil, therefore, on that article, would be a breach of the principle of the proposed basis in its most essential part.” On this principle, therefore, the negotiation commenced ; but if the French Minister seemed to allow it, it was evidently with the design of amusing the British Ministry until the sinuous and dangerous policy of his court might take effect. Russia and England, the one a great military power, and the other the greatest naval power in the world, whilst united, were yet dangerous enemies to France. The cause of the Continent was not hopeless, although three coalitions had been defeated ; for, as the subsequent campaign proved, Russia alone was not a contemptible enemy. If the negotiation had any other object than to keep England at a distance from Prussia until the designs of France upon that power were ripe

for execution, and Prussia being defeated, that Russia might be left alone to contend with the immense military force of Buonaparte ; that object was to divide England and Russia, and, by embroiling these two powers, to establish the influence of France over the Continent by negotiation, rather than risk the chances of open war. Or rather, perhaps, it is not too much to say, that these two objects were attempted at the same time. Agreeably to this intrigue, while our Ambassador was amused by the implied *uti possidetis*, M. D'Oubriel, the Russian Minister, was induced to sign a separate treaty. The terms then proposed to England were advanced, and the original basis denied and ridiculed by the French Government. When the attempt to separate Russia from England had failed, and the treaty was returned unratified by the Emperor Alexander, the diplomatic force of France was employed in the opposite direction ; and to induce England to separate herself from Russia, terms more nearly approaching the former basis were offered. But when the British Ministry, now fully awake to the designs of France, had resolved not to treat but in conjunction with Russia, the negotiation was broken off ; and France, disappointed in her designs, resolved rather to risk a war for which she had all along been making the most active preparations, than to submit to a peace, the conditions of which, though honourable to her and her allies, would have marked her boundary, and provided for the permanent repose of Europe.

When, therefore, you stretch the expression in His Majesty's recent declaration against the Emperor of Russia, that " the last negotiation was broken off upon points immediately affecting, not His Majesty's own interests, but those of his imperial ally," to signify that the contest was wholly continued " for interests not his own," you certainly misrepresent the subject, and, in imitation of the petty party journalists of the day, give it a meaning which it could never be designed to convey. Although the demands of Russia were the immediate subjects of discussion when the negotiations terminated, the interests of Britain were not secured. The original basis was not again reverted to ; and if France had

agreed to the terms proposed by Russia, as far as they related to herself, the interests of this country and its allies would still have remained unadjusted. His Majesty's declaration of 1806, on the failure of this negotiation, contains a full confirmation of this remark. "In consequence of this important event," the refusal of the Emperor of Russia to sign the separate treaty, "the strongest assurances were given to His Majesty's Minister, that France was now prepared to make sacrifices to a great extent in order, by securing peace with Great Britain, to re-establish the tranquillity of the world. Terms were offered to His Majesty more nearly approaching than before to the original basis of negotiation ; but these were still far short of what His Majesty had uniformly insisted on, and was now more than ever entitled to expect ; and the decisive rejection of the just demands of Russia, as well as of the conditions proposed by His Majesty in behalf of his other allies, left to His Majesty no other course than that of ordering his Minister to terminate the discussions and to return to England." Another paragraph from the same instrument may also serve to illustrate the real character of the Government with which we were treating for peace ; and as it is the production of a favourite Ministry, you will perhaps feel rather awkward at objecting to its statements. After mentioning the conclusion of a separate treaty with the Russian Minister, the declaration proceeds : "The French court, on the contrary, elated by this advantage, of which it boasted as equal in importance to the most decisive victory, departed in every conference more and more widely from its own offers and engagements. Not only did it take upon itself to change at his own pleasure the basis of the negotiation with Great Britain ; but it violated, in points still more important, every principle of good faith with Russia. The chief inducement offered to that power, as the price of all the sacrifices extorted from her Minister, had been the preservation of Germany ; yet, before the decision of Russia on this treaty could be known, France had already annihilated the whole frame and constitution of the German empire ; had reduced under her own yoke a large portion of the states and

provinces of Germany ; and, not content with this open contempt of obligations so recently contracted, had at the same time instigated the Porte to measures directly subversive of the subsisting engagements with Russia."

The Whig Administration could not then make peace. Their sincerity will not be questioned, but they found that no terms could be agreed upon which could render that peace secure. Had it been only for Russian interests that the negotiation was broken off, that ground would have been sufficient, inasmuch as it was absolutely necessary that Britain should have allies on the Continent to check, or in some degree balance, the immense influence of France, and that our good faith to Russia should be preserved immaculate. But our own interests were not, according to that Ministry, secured. There was no frankness, no cordiality, on the part of France ; and her conduct in pursuing a system of aggression in defiance of the surreptitious treaty she had concluded with Russia, made it evident that if England had agreed to a peace with France, on the terms proposed by the latter, that peace, like the peace of Amiens, would, from the prevalent ambition of the enemy, have been only an uneasy and vexatious truce, a mere prelude to another war. I am free to grant, with you, that " the British Ministers did not compromise the dignity, nor commit the character, of the country ; " (Page 55;) but they certainly committed their own characters as negotiators. Never were any persons more completely entangled in the snares of French intrigue, or so conveniently kept at bay until the designs of France upon what remained of independence on the Continent were fully matured. But there is a more serious charge : Not only their want of diplomatic skill has been the subject of public censure, but their inaction, their criminal want of judgment, and the total absence of all energy in the prosecution of that war they found themselves compelled to continue. During the time the negotiation was pending, and especially from the moment that the French Government began to depart from the accepted basis first offered, the utmost activity ought to have prevailed at home. France never ceased from military preparations : Why, then,

did we half sheath the sword? All ought to have been in motion throughout the military and naval departments. Transports ought to have been taken up, and every disposable regiment in the kingdom marched down to the coast, to have embarked at a moment's notice. Either, in that case, the negotiation would have been influenced, or a firm and numerous body of British troops would have been ready to co-operate with our allies. But nothing was done, but what was narrow in its principle, and injudicious in its direction.

This is a part of your subject which you have dispatched with the utmost brevity. “Of the part which Great Britain acted in this dreadful struggle, it is not necessary to say much. The inefficacy of that union between her and Russia, which had been so triumphantly dwelt upon, as likely to restrain or overturn the power of France, soon became manifest. Debarred by her natural situation, it was not in the power of Great Britain to assist her ally by the aid of a single man, or even to effect a diversion of any importance in his favour; and she thus stood a silent spectator of the additional ruin to the Governments of Europe consequent upon the fatal rejection of the terms offered but a few months before by the ruler of the French.” (Page 66.) England did stand a “silent spectator” of this eventful contest; but it is to the eternal shame of those who then had the command of her energies. When you say, that it was out of the power of England to assist Russia by the aid of a single man, the assertion is bold and unsubstantiated. It is false. Russia might have been assisted; Russia had the promise of the British Ministry to assist her; but the promise was not kept. The dull negative policy of that Administration was a subject of reprobation at the time they were in office; but the papers of late laid before the Parliament, at their own request, have rendered their condemnation complete. In October, after the unfortunate opening of the Prussian campaign, Lord Howick, in his dispatches to the British Minister at St. Petersburgh, instructs him to urge the immediate advance of the Russian armies, and “the application of all the forces of that empire in aid of the continental war.” In November, his Lordship observes, in another

dispatch, that “the increase of the danger will animate His Britannic Majesty to increased exertions for the sake of the common cause.” In December, the Marquis of Douglas is instructed to inform the Russian court, that “the same sentiment was entertained at London as at St. Petersburgh of the necessity of combined exertions to resist the increasing danger.” To meet these views of the British Government, the Emperor required a loan of £6,000,000 sterling, to be repaid with interest; General Budberg alleging “the extraordinary expenses which the vigorous measures in which His Imperial Majesty was engaged, imposed upon him, and which could not with sufficient promptitude be drawn out of the resources of Russia.” This loan was refused, and no other means devised to meet the expense of the Russian armies. The negotiation for this supply was conducted by Lord Howick in the true spirit of a stockbroker, and afforded an early proof of that niggardly spirit of economy shown by the late Administration, which first crippled the Russian armies, and afterwards their own expeditions. It was a blunder only worthy of the men who then managed our foreign relations, to urge the rapid march of all the military power of the Russian empire to fight our battles, and then to leave them to absolute starvation! In February, the Russian court began to complain “that the promises of England were not put into execution; and that the whole of the enemy’s forces were directed against Russia, at a time when Great Britain did not show any disposition to diminish the danger by a diversion against France and Holland.” These complaints became louder and more pressing, and were answered by excuses respecting the season of the year, promises of co-operation the first opportunity, and a demand for the renewal of the commercial treaty! Lord Hutchinson, in March, in a dispatch to Lord Howick, strongly recommends a diversion in the rear of the French, which he asserts would create serious embarrassments, and oblige them to detach such a number of troops as would soon leave them inferior to the allies. The Marquis of Douglas also presses the same subject, and observes, in his dispatch dated April 27th, 1807, “It is impossible that I should be deaf to the

murmurs that surround me, to the expectation of thousands. I cannot without jealousy look to the possible consequences." Was aid ever sent? "Up to this day," (June 30th,) General Budberg observes, "the diversion on the Continent which England has so long proposed has not taken place." All Europe knows the result of what the British Ministry at length attempted to do. Insanity itself could scarcely have devised measures more irrelevant to the great purposes of the war than were adopted. There was every possible motive to exertion; and it was invited by the fairest prospect of success the allied cause had ever exhibited. The cause which was contested on the banks of the Vistula was as certainly the cause of England as the cause of Russia. England had, in fact, more to fear from the colossal power of France, and the prostration of Germany, because France is her natural rival, and her most formidable enemy. She was therefore bound by every tie of interest and of honour, as well as by express stipulations, to have employed every possible energy in aiding the only power on the Continent capable of resisting France. So far from your assertion, Sir, being correct, that England "could not aid Russia by a single man," she might have aided her with fifty thousand, if decision and vigour had not been displaced by indifference and imbecility. The great, the indispensable object was to relieve Russia from the undivided pressure of the French force. This might have been done by a descent on Holland or Italy, or by a diversion in the rear of the French army in Poland; where, according to the opinion of Lord Hutchinson, Stralsund, in every event, would have opened a secure retreat to the British troops. But nothing could rouse the torpidity of that Ministry. Whilst they were negotiating at Paris, they ought to have been preparing for war; neglecting that till the approach of winter, instead of preparing the promised expedition, so that it might have been dispatched early in the season, they were dreaming of frosts which were never felt, and of storms which never blew; and at last, when they began to do something, there was no great effort in aid of the common cause, and the ill success of their partial, divided, and useless expeditions,

served only to provoke the contempt of our enemies, to alienate our allies, and to plunge the country into its present embarrassment.*

I shall not follow you into your remarks on the expedition to Copenhagen, because it has met a complete discussion in the British senate, and I believe every man in the kingdom has made up his mind on the subject. For myself, I consider it, as I have always done, a wise and a just measure. **JUST**, because Denmark had ceased to be a free agent ; and it became our indispensable duty to wrest a weapon of offence out of her hands which she had no other option than to employ against us ; and **WISE**, because by that means we have broken a second time the force of a northern confederacy, and left our navy at liberty from watching additional hostile squadrons, to defend our own commerce, and injure that of the enemy. The necessity of the measure is its justification ; and that necessity has been, by the debates in Parliament, and various political writings, completely proved to the country. On this obvious principle the merits of the question rest ; here it challenges discussion, and defies the state tricks of a discontented Opposition, who attempt to reprobate it, because the vigour of its execution puts the imbecility of their Administration to the blush. You have said, in order to enhance the horrors of that

* “ ‘Schemes of internal improvement,’ which Ministers ‘have manifested their determination to pursue !’ What ! when empires and potent kingdoms in the twinkling of an eye are daily vanishing from our sight ; when, at the pointing of the great necromancer’s sabre, Victory conducts his legions to battle, and Dominion takes the course in the direction he bids ; are we to counteract the spell, by making auditors of accounts ? Are we to avert from ourselves the mighty mischief that has overwhelmed so many nations, by ‘improving’ the law courts beyond the Tweed ? As many ‘internal improvements’ as Ministers please ; but as foundations of their fame as statesmen, in the present crisis of England’s destiny, such petty objects are very trash and trumpery. Napoleon, I doubt not, has his ‘internal improvements’ in finance and police ; but these are not the things of which you hear. To place France at the head of nations, and himself at the head of all conquerors, are his objects. To place England on the rock of security, to preserve her independence and her honour, ought to be the leading object of her Ministers.”—**MAJOR CARTWRIGHT’S Letter to Mr. Whitbread**, in **Cobbett’s Register**, December, 1806.

affair, that it has thrown Denmark into the arms of France ; but she was before in the arms of France, because she was completely under the power of France ;—that the ports of Holland have been more rigidly closed against our commerce ; but they have not been more effectually closed since that time than before ;—that Russia has been made our enemy ; but, Sir, the hostility of Russia was anterior to that event ; it arose from the criminal neglect of that ally by your favourite Ministry, by which she was reduced under the power and influence of France. The papers respecting Russia lately laid before Parliament, prove that this was the remote cause of the present Russian war ; and that the immediate cause was not the attack on Denmark,—for, after that was known, the Russian Government manifested an inclination to conciliation with England,—but the “ incalculable influence ” obtained by the French over the Russian councils in consequence of their victories. You have also said, that our conduct towards Denmark has excited all Europe against us. But, Sir, from what can you judge of the sentiments of European states, but from the state papers of powers under the immediate control of France, and from newspapers equally controlled ? These sources are certainly not much to be depended upon. There is no organ of the public sentiment on the Continent. Since the murder of Palm, what writer has dared to impugn the policy of Napoleon, or applaud the conduct of his enemies ? The press there is brought to that state of submission to the dictates of France, to which you, in a former part of your pamphlet, appear to have wished the English press to have been reduced. But, Sir, there are proofs against you more unequivocal. The court of Portugal has thrown itself into the arms of England, this great violator of the law of nations. Sweden has not joined in the universal cry of “ horror and detestation.” Prussia has declared war without reproaching us ; and Austria has given offence to the mighty Emperor and King, because she has refused to join the hue and cry raised by the artifice of France against England. Your complaint of the injury done to the national character, and to the principles of public morality, could only have weight in case the injustice of the

expedition to Copenhagen had been proved ; but it has not been proved, and we have therefore the satisfaction to conclude that the national character is up to this moment unsullied, and that it has suffered no eclipse from the seizure of the Danish fleet.

The conclusion of your publication is as singular as its general structure. In page 96, you recapitulate your arguments : " If it should appear, as I have before attempted to show, that the war which begun in 1803, was instigated by a few interested and unprincipled individuals, and by a spirit of animosity and rancour which blew up into a conflagration a contemptible dispute about the island of Malta ; that in the year 1806, peace might have been established, if we had not preferred the interests of Russia to our own, and that this cause of hostilities is now removed by the treaty of Tilsit, and the declaration of war by Russia against Great Britain ; the reasons alleged in support of the war are weak and futile, and its further prosecution promises no advantages equal to the difficulties and dangers we must inevitably incur from it, and therefore we ought to approach the throne of the Sovereign in dutiful and loyal addresses," &c. But, Sir, as far as this conclusion is founded upon the view of facts and arguments contained in the former part of your pamphlet, it is evidently premature, because, as I have shown, the principles you have assumed in the discussion are fallacious. You have not proved the impolicy of the war, though you have condemned it. You have not proved the disposition of the enemy to enter into and to preserve the relations of amity with England, though you have asserted it. You have not proved the unwillingness of the British Administrations who have most vigorously supported the war, to make peace upon honourable terms, though you have denounced them the advocates of perpetual war. Your conclusion may therefore be deemed as unsound in policy, and as unsupported by argument, as your former statements. In imitation of you, I may also recapitulate : If, as I have attempted to show, the ardent spirit of democratical proselytism, operating upon the natural ambition of the French people, produced an unbounded ambition, and

a thirst of universal dominion ; that a plan of aggression and encroachment upon other states was laid by their ablest men in the earliest periods of the revolution, and has since been uniformly followed under every mode of government, whether republican, consular, or imperial ; that the French Revolution not only overturned the political, but the moral, system of that country, and, by destroying a sense of religious obligation, gave rise to the perpetration of every crime, at home and abroad, which wantonness, cruelty, or rapine could devise, and to a system of foreign policy, cunning, perfidious, and dangerous to every other power ; the execution of which it has committed into the hands of men equally base in their origin and their principles, and the more dangerous, because possessed of great talents ; that the peace of Amiens was broken by the aggressions of the enemy, whose object in making the peace was evidently to unite the advantages of commerce by a peace, with foreign spoliations, which were committed with as little ceremony as in war, and that the renewal of hostilities was sanctioned, not by bands "of hireling journalists," but by the nation, and the most respectable persons of all parties ; that the negotiation in 1806 failed, according to the confession of the very men who, before that time, and almost ever since, have most clamorously cried out for peace, because peace could not be obtained on terms consistent with "national honour and security ;" that throughout the whole of the contest the enemy has never manifested any serious intention to conclude a peace, but such a one as would leave him fully at liberty to pursue a system of aggression against this country and its allies, in a word, against the world ;—it will then follow, that to make peace with an enemy of so dangerous a character, whose hatred to this country has been on every occasion unequivocally expressed, who has made it evident that he respects not the faith of treaties, and who is determined, whether in peace or war, to pursue the suggestions of his own lawless ambition, demands, at least, the utmost caution ; and that the present hostile disposition he appears to possess, and even the terms of peace he has lately obliquely hinted to us, ought "to unite us more

closely in the prosecution of the war, and reconcile us to make such further sacrifices as we may yet be called upon to make." (Page 97.)

The great conclusions you wish to establish are, that an immediate peace is necessary for the country; that a peace may be obtained which will effectually secure its true interests; and that it is proper to petition the throne to open a negotiation for this purpose. But lest the history you have given of the conduct and consequences of the war should fail to produce entire conviction, you have endeavoured in your concluding pages to enforce the subject by several supernumerary considerations and arguments; which, like a reserved corps, may be brought up as occasion serves, to support the main body. You endeavour first to engage the sympathy of your readers on your side, by a feeling, and, I will allow, well-drawn portrait, of the miseries of war; next, you apply to our fears, by stating the probability, that, in case the contest is continued, France will be able to create a navy, which may completely overwhelm the marine of this country, and effect an entire conquest of these islands; and, lastly, that no string may remain untouched, you have a secret to whisper to our hopes,—that peace will infallibly bring with it the return of commerce and wealth, and open to us the prospect of the most extensive national aggrandizement.

To be unfeeling to the sufferings necessarily attendant upon a state of warfare, would discover a heart which almost every man would be ashamed to own; but sympathetic feeling is not confined to the philosopher of Allerton, or to the party who now most assiduously endeavour to storm the Government into negotiation. It is felt in as great a degree of purity and power in the breasts of those who most cordially approve of the measures of His Majesty's present Ministers, and who are willing to combine all their energies to give effect to the war, only to secure a permanent peace, as in any body of men whatever. But, Sir, there is a false sensibility which hastens the evils it deprecates, and prolongs those it wishes to remove. Sensibility,

like every other feeling, must be controlled and directed by reason before it can become a safe rule of action ; and without this it is rather an impulse of the blood, than an amiable quality of the mind. Should the sensibility of a surgeon prevent him from amputating a mortifying limb, he would release his patient from the pain of the knife, only to resign him to the agonies of death. It is a sound maxim which we may venture to set against a host of fastidious sympathies,

“ Rather to bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of ; ”

and more especially when in our patient endurance of these ills lies the only certain means of their alleviation. “ Far be from me the idea,” says M. F. Ancillon in his *Tableau des Révolutions du Système Politique de l’Europe, &c.*, “ of lessening the natural horror which war inspires, and in which I participate with all the friends of humanity. I desire only to prove that, in the general chain of events, good may sometimes arise from that destructive scourge. Peace is, and always will be, the first of earthly blessings ; but a nation ought never to forget that there is an evil greater than war : It is the loss of her political independence, and of her national existence.” But these, you tell us, “ are the result of the fears of the weak, who, in the apprehension of distant dangers, are insensible to those which are immediately impending over them.” By persevering in the contest we shall in all probability “ school the navies of France to triumph over ourselves.” This, it is true, is attacking our fears where they are the most alive ; for, from the moment our marine is conquered, we are blotted out from the nations of Europe. Fears, however, of such an event I should certainly be inclined to place amongst the “ fears of the weak.” Buonaparte has used every means which his own resources and his influence over other powers have furnished, to rival the British navy ; but every effort of this kind has been defeated by the skill and courage of our Commanders, and the wise and vigorous measures of our Government. His own powerful fleets having

been almost annihilated, his next attempt was to seize those of weaker powers; and, by combining them with the force of his allies in a general confederacy, to dispute with us the empire of the ocean. That plan has been broken, and the confederacy destroyed in its bud. France may build ships, but during the war she cannot fill them with seamen. Not only her intercourse with her colonies is suspended, but even her own coasting trade: She has in consequence no nursery for seamen. These must be trained by long or frequent voyages, which, whilst the war continues, cannot be made. Peace alone must replenish the navy of France, and long experience render it efficient. This I confess I do not regard as any impediment to a peace with France. I have that confidence in the superior skill and valour of British seamen, that I should feel no uneasiness respecting the result of a naval engagement under the best circumstances in which France could place her navy, in case of a renewal of war. But if this be no hinderance to peace, so, allowing your opinion that it is probable France may create a formidable marine should we persevere in the contest, I do not think it any argument in favour of submission. This cannot terrify us into a premature and a false peace. Should peace bring out of her ports a navy equal or superior in number to our own, we should do as we have done before, confide in the justice of our cause, and the blessing of Providence to add another to the splendid list of naval victories which adorn our annals. Whether in peace or war, I believe, to use your own words, "if we are but true to ourselves, we may regard all the efforts of France to rival us, as a maritime power, without dismay."

The prosperity of our commerce, of which, in the event of a peace, you have given so glowing a picture, must depend wholly upon the terms of that peace. I am not an advocate for perpetual war; but I am an advocate for the continuance and vigorous prosecution of the war, until such a peace can be obtained as will place the country in a secure and prosperous situation. The next peace we make will, it is probable, either sign our death-warrant, or secure our privileges for ever. It is

not the partial interest of our merchants and manufacturers that is now at stake ; it is the interest of the empire, and of posterity. That we can now make such a peace as will secure our great interests, and preserve our independence and national strength unsullied and unimpaired to our children, is at least doubtful ; and in the opinion of as wise, as disinterested, and as patriotic characters as the nation can boast, impossible. It is strange that you insist so forcibly on the necessity of making an immediate peace, without mentioning the terms on which it is probable it may be obtained. But you wish to inspire a confidence in the moderation of the French Government, which is most sincerely to be deprecated. It is the most fatal error into which we can fall ; and no one can more essentially injure his country than by promoting it. With such an enemy every suspicion ought to be awake. Neither the character of Buonaparte, nor that of the nation he governs, in its present state, is entitled to confidence. Justice and honour are out of the question ; interest and ambition alone are the principles of their conduct. We can never expect a peace on terms to which England ought to submit, until it is the interest of France to make it ; and in all probability the conditions of that peace will be no longer observed by the present Government of France, than while they accord with the state of its interests, or the views of its ambition. Peace with such a Government, it is evident, can hold out no cheering prospect to Great Britain, either in its arrangements or its permanence, until France imperiously feels it to be her interest to make peace, and her interest to observe it.

Such a state of things, I, however, think, is rapidly approaching, and, as it approximates, brings with it a fairer and more enlivening prospect of terminating the war in a manner which may prevent its speedy renewal. So long since as the affair of Ulm, Buonaparte observed to General Mack, that he wanted "ships, colonies, and commerce." These wants cannot be now less pressing. They are redoubled. The navy of France has been brought, since that time, to a

still lower degree of degradation ; the colonies of France, and her dependent states, are become more limited ; the practicability of intercourse with those that remain is rendered a matter of the most difficult enterprise ; and the commerce of France, before too contracted to produce very favourable efforts upon her internal wealth, or internal maritime importance, has been reduced to the brink of annihilation, by the unprecedented and unjust regulations of her own decrees. If the attainment of these objects be motives to conciliation with this country, they operate upon France, with a force increased by the lapse of every year, and every day. France has enlarged her territory to an extent unknown in the annals of her history ; but she has neither secured to herself, nor to her newly-organised states, the means of rendering that empire great and prosperous. Society must, at least, assume the appearance of tranquillity, before industry can be excited to those exertions which will produce more than the mere supply of necessary wants ; and it is peace alone which, by encouraging general commerce, can recruit the energies of countries exhausted by revolutions, by exactions, and by war. Portugal and Spain are now wholly separated from those colonies from which they derived their whole support, and on which they had been accustomed for ages to depend ; Holland is reduced to the verge of absolute ruin ; France has lost the only medium through which her foreign commerce could circulate, the intercourse of neutrals ; and Russia, blinded for a time by councils, the labyrinths of which she appears scarcely to have the capacity to explore, has engaged in a contest in which she has every thing to lose, and little essential to her real interests to gain. Buonaparte boasts of an army of eight hundred thousand soldiers ; but not the whole of this force is able to annihilate a single British frigate ; not the whole of this force can give effect to his decrees beyond the limits of his own harbours ; and he must either be content to stretch his sceptre over wildness and desolation, or give prosperity to the Continent by a peace which shall open the navigation of the seas, and unite the interests of Europe, by reciprocating the productions of its soil,

and mechanical skill, through the medium of a maritime intercourse.

But this state of things ought rather to encourage our perseverance and patience, than weaken our efforts. It cannot be inferred from this, that the time is arrived, when a peace with France may be made with advantage. Every day's intelligence from the Continent proves how greatly every state at enmity with this country is suffering from the interruption of its commerce ; but "the tyrant of the Continent," supported by his immense military force, has the means for a time of stifling their murmurs, and crushing their resistance. He will, in the contest into which he brings their sufferance with the power of Britain, push them to the utmost limits of endurance ; and will first try the extent of our patience and firmness, before he will relieve their pressures, by entering into liberal arrangements for a general peace. We, too, must feel our share of privations, though, from the riches left in the country by a flourishing commerce, which has but of late met any diminution, and the foreign trade we can still command, we shall feel them in a much smaller degree than the continental states ; but it can only be by a patriotic display of fortitude and perseverance on our part, that the contest will be brought to a speedier termination. Our navy is the only means left us of offensive attack ; it is the right arm of our country, and must be wielded with vigour. It is, in reality, what the lever of Archimedes was in imagination, the power that moves the world ; but if its energies require to be applied with skill, it must also derive its full effect from the operation of united strength. To relax in our endeavours would not relieve us from the operation of the blockading decrees of Buonaparte, which existed before this country resorted to measures of retaliation ; and if ever we make a good peace, it must be when the country stands in the most menacing attitude ; when it presents an undaunted front, both to external threats, and to domestic suffering. To yield is ruin ; and to betray impatience is to throw ourselves at the feet of the enemy.

It is on this account, Sir, that I can by no means agree

with you in recommending petitions to the throne for peace. That they have in some places been promoted out of mere party motives, is too much to be suspected ; but if we concede the goodness of their intention, it requires few arguments to show their impolicy, and that they are of little weight in a question of national policy. Nothing can be more easy than to gain signatures to such instruments from any number of manufacturers and mechanics, who are suffering in consequence of the war ; but such acts, being only expressions of personal privations, and not the results of enlightened and extensive views of the relations of the country, are of no authority in a question of peace or war. I am far, very far, from thinking that the distress of our manufacturers ought to be passed over without notice : On the contrary, they ought to fix the attention, not only of the Government, but of the opulent part of the community without exception. The state of the lower classes, where the pressure of the war falls heaviest, ought to be, as far as possible, relieved. Because they are incapable of feeling the force of those motives which should lead a people, in times of national exigency, to submit to sacrifices, and because they are unable to submit to them, they ought to be relieved ; and I think patriotism may devise the means to afford that relief. The present contest ought to be supported until we can secure a peace, safe and honourable to the country ; but it ought to be supported by retrenching unnecessary expenditure in the state, and by the sacrifices of the rich, not of the poor. Had these been petitions to Government for relief, they would have deserved the attention of Parliament, and the support of the country ; but as they assume to prescribe to Ministers the time of entering into negotiations with the enemy, they bear very suspicious marks of the design of a party, operating upon the feelings of the populace to effect that change of policy by constraint, for which other measures have been found ineffectual. In this respect they not only serve the purposes of a party, but of the common enemy. It is known in France, that there is a party in England, which clamours for immediate peace ; that would feel little hesitation, so great is their confidence in the magna-

nious Emperor of the French, to send a *carte blanche*, and desire him to write his own conditions. Buonaparte wishes to animate this party to create dissension, to produce distrust ; and thus, by clogging the wheels of Government, to paralyze those efforts by which Britain struggles to support her independence, and to maintain her honour. Did Ministers wantonly withhold the return of peace from the nation, the petitions might, on that ground, be defended ; but of this there is no proof, except the singular one you have mentioned in one part of your publication,—that they were the coadjutors of Mr. Pitt ! They have, however, openly professed their sincere desire to make peace as soon as it can be done with safety ; and in this respect I see no reason why they should not be entitled to credit. Peace on terms consistent with the national welfare would be so universally popular, that Ministers of any political opinions would be anxious to accomplish it as a measure which, more than any other, would tend to secure the confidence and love of the people, and to fix themselves securely in their elevated situations ; and, in fact, there is something so tempting in it, that it ought rather to be feared that it may be restored to us too early, than withheld from us by design.

But you have told us repeatedly, that since the separation of Russia from our interests, “all the motives which were urged for the prosecution of the war have ceased to operate ; and that we are now left without an ally, without an object, and without a cause.” If so, it is certainly high time to turn our thoughts to the termination of a worse than useless struggle, and to employ ourselves in something more rational than a contest which has neither motive nor object. The late Ministry, by their neglect of Russia, it is true, have left us without an ally of importance ; but the consequences of their misconduct have not been so fortunate in leaving us quite destitute of a cause. The defeat of the Russian arms, and the disgust produced in the mind of the Russian Emperor, by the conduct of the British Ministers, in withholding their co-operation in the arduous contest in which he had been engaged, threw our most valuable ally into the arms of France. From that

moment the principle of the war changed. France and Russia both joined in the same cause ; and the object of that coalition was to attack, and force us to renounce, our maritime rights. To defend these has hitherto been the immediate object of the war since that time ; for what is the object of the enemy to destroy, is certainly our object to defend and to preserve. The negotiations Buonaparte has held out to us since that time have been, therefore, for a “maritime peace ;” that is, a peace in which we shall renounce all interference and connexion with the continent of Europe, and render our naval rights and ancient maritime jurisprudence, the firmest bulwark of our safety and prosperity, the subject of discussion and infringement. This, then, is the kind of peace Buonaparte offers us ; and these are the principles on which we must commence a negotiation, if we commence it now. It remains, then, for you who wish an immediate peace, and who blame Ministers for not concluding one, to say whether we shall take it on these conditions. No, Sir, we will not accept this basis ; we will not suffer our naval superiority, the most precious gift of Providence, the most valuable legacy of our ancestors, and which has been confirmed to us by the valour of our contemporaries who have fought and died in our defence, to be made the subject of negotiation for a moment. Thank God, if we be true to ourselves, we can support the contest. Whilst our navy stands unshaken amidst the wreck of nations, our trade will not only be protected, but enlarged. Difficulties only call forth the resources of a great people ; and the resources of England are not exhausted. She still possesses an extensive commerce ; and her capital, her industry, and her enterprise, must finally break down the barriers which are opposed to her prosperity. Buonaparte knows this, and he fears it ; and if he cannot succeed in enervating us by disunion, he is evidently prepared to acknowledge those rights, against which he so loudly declaims, and which we for that reason ought as strenuously to defend. This, Sir, is the glorious object of the present struggle ; it is the object we are called upon, by every consideration of justice, honour, and interest, to defend. It is dear to us as the soil on which we tread, as the constitution

under which we live ; it is the only guarantee of our independence, and the only sure pledge of our future commercial prosperity. If the sea cannot be our empire, let it be our grave. "This is the true position, this is the high destiny, of our country ; and nothing but a political suicide, a total incapacity to meet the bounties of Providence, and to improve its blessings, can induce us to hesitate, for a moment, as to the course we ought to pursue."

I am yours, &c.,

* * * * *

A DEFENCE
OF
THE WESLEYAN-METHODIST MISSIONS
IN
THE WEST INDIES:
INCLUDING
A REFUTATION OF THE CHARGES
IN
MR. MARRYAT'S "THOUGHTS ON THE ABOLITION OF THE
SLAVE-TRADE," &c.
AND IN OTHER PUBLICATIONS:
WITH FACTS AND ANECDOTES,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE MORAL STATE OF THE SLAVES,
AND OF THE OPERATION OF MISSIONS.

And they laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.—Acts xxv. 7.

[FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1817.]

A DEFENCE OF THE WESLEYAN-METHODIST MISSIONS.

IT is well remarked, by a writer in the *Christian Observer*, that “ man, in a state of absolute domestic slavery, is, to those who devote their days to amusement or speculation, quite uninteresting. With nothing to hope, and, therefore, little to fear ; governed neither by interest, by passion, by ambition, nor by affection ; exhibiting neither the lawless daring of savage life, nor the amenity and grace of polished society ; the slave is an object of curiosity with two classes only,— those who seek to mitigate his misfortunes, and such as are led by their avocations to study the market-prices of their fellow-creatures.”

The former class is, however, happily on the increase. The ardent benevolence which of late years has spread itself through all orders of society, which has associated the wise and good of all religious parties, the more effectually to raise the condition of their fellow-men in all countries, if it has not expressed itself as yet in any great general attempt to improve the moral condition of the slave population of our West India colonies, must have prepared a large proportion of the British public to commiserate their state, when fairly brought before them ; and may reasonably be expected to give birth to exertions in behalf of a degraded portion of our race, united to our sympathies, not only as men, but as fellow-subjects.

It is, indeed, surprising, that, after repeated expressions of public sentiment on the subject of the slave-trade had

induced the Legislature of this country to adopt the great measure of abolition, the slaves already in bondage in our colonies should be discharged from the recollection and cares of that very people, whose humanity and Christian principles had prompted them to persevere, “through evil report and good report,” to the attainment of their object; and that, with the exception of a few, whose ever-watchful eyes were directed to the condition of the negro, it should appear sufficient to have destroyed the traffic in slaves on the coasts of Africa, to have swept from the ocean every slave-ship bearing the British flag, and to project means for inducing other powers to follow the example. It seemed enough that Africa was relieved; but her children in the West Indies were, in a great degree, forgotten.

Was it, that, after so much toil, the agents in the struggle sought repose? that the glory of the triumph seemed to demand a respite from enterprise, that they might have leisure to enjoy the contemplation of its magnitude, and the difficulties it had surmounted? Or was it, that the moral condition of the colonial slave population had never been fully displayed? The last was probably the true cause. The desolation which the slave-trade inflicted on the shores of Africa, the horrors of the middle passage, the cruelties which had been exercised in different parts of the colonies, were all brought before the world. Sober narrative, the appeals of a generous indignation, painting, and poetry, were employed to state affecting facts, and rouse the strongest feelings of justice or of shame, as to the bodily wrongs inflicted upon the negro race; but it has never, with equal warmth and energy, been pressed upon the attention of the British public, that considerably more than half a million* of blacks and coloured

* Dr. Colquhoun gives the following returns:—

In the West India colonies,	64,794 Europeans,
	33,081 free persons of colour,
	634,096 negro labourers.

In the Conquered colonies,	85,829 Europeans,
	26,253 free persons of colour,
	372,800 negro labourers.

Some of the conquered colonies have been since restored.

people held as slaves in the British colonies live and die, not only without personal liberty, and the enjoyment of many important civil rights, for which, in truth, they are not in every case prepared ; but without any religious instruction, except such as is offered by voluntary charity ; without education of the lowest kind ; without any attempt to civilize or moralize them ; without even the forms of marriage ; and, of course, without the domestic relations ; being left to vegetate and die on the soil, without ever feeling the powers of immortal man, except in those misdirections which give ferocity to their resentments, cunning to their fraud, and impetuosity to their appetites. Such, however, is the condition, at this moment, of by far the greater part of the slave population of our colonies ; and in this condition have lived and died the successive millions who, from the commencement of the slave-trade, have passed through the life of toil and injury our laws or our practice had assigned them, to depose before the bar of eternal justice the general neglect of a Christian people, to promote, in any efficient degree, their moral happiness.

Did such neglect exist in an English county, it would be contemplated with horror, and immediately relieved : All the difference, however, lies between the breadth of a river, and that of a sea. The West Indies are, not less than our counties, portions of the British empire ; their inhabitants not less its subjects ; the duty of a Christian Government to provide for their religious instruction, or to protect those from insult and injury who would instruct them, is the same ; and, whatever local and accidental reasons may exist against affording them the full participation of our civil rights, none can exist for refusing them the benefits of our religion. If this be pleaded, then, indeed, it would lay the strongest ground possible for denouncing the state of negro servitude in the West Indies, so unnatural and shocking a position of a part of society, that such an interference of the parent Government with the internal regulations of the colonies, as the colonial writers so loudly protest against, would be a measure of absolute necessity to save the country from deep disgrace, and from a responsi-

bility too fearful to be contemplated by any who seriously believe that “there is a God who judgeth in the earth.”

It is not supposed that considerations of this kind will create any concern in the breast of infidelity ; or produce any effect upon the hearts of such men as contemplate the negro, only to calculate the weight of his bone, and the strength of his muscle. In those they will excite no interest who, whether at home or abroad, are habitually indifferent to the moral interests of their fellow-creatures ; nor affect persons who, like a colonial writer against Missions, almost unequivocally avow that all religions are alike, and that no religion is better than them all. But there is, in this country, a great body of thinking and religious characters, of all denominations, and of all ranks, whose charities respect not only the body, but the mind ; who view religion both as the instrument of civil amelioration, and of a moral improvement in which not only the individual, but society, is deeply interested ; who consider man under the aspects in which he is presented to them in a revelation which they believe ; and estimate his importance by measures taken from his accountableness to his Maker, and his own ever-during nature. In the minds of such persons they will awaken a deep and painful interest. By them it will be admitted, that our debt to the children of Africa, whom we have enslaved, has run greatly into arrear : And, whether their views respecting the civil condition of the West India slaves induce them to admit the necessity of their interminable bondage ; or they look forward to their ultimate, but gradual, emancipation ; they will be ready to admit, not only a defence of those benevolent undertakings, which, under the name of Missions, have already effected so much good in the colonies ; but the necessity, also, of a general exertion on the part of all Christians at home, to provide more adequately for the instruction of the colonial negro in Christian knowledge, morals, and hopes. If, indeed, so dire a necessity shall be made out, that the negroes of our colonies must transmit the chain to successive generations, then the least compensation we can make is, to put them in possession of the light and consolations of our religion : If a better fate await them, it is only

by the influence of Christianity that they can be qualified for the privileges of freedom, and be enabled rightly and safely to enjoy it.

Dishonourable as the neglect of the negro slave is to a Christian and a Protestant country, it is yet a hopeful circumstance, that it has been confronted by our professed principles. Principles may be inert, or their operation counteracted by prejudice and sloth ; but whilst they are avowed, hope cannot be extinguished. The very existence of a national Establishment recognises the principle, that it is the duty of a Christian Government to provide for the religious instruction of its subjects ; and on that principle, thus avowed, the meanest and most neglected negro slave might fix his claim, and look up to the parent state, whose subject he is. The obligation of communicating the blessings of the Gospel to this class of men, was recognised in the constitution of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which chose for the scene of its operation the British colonies in North America ; and for its objects, “the natives of Great Britain who had emigrated there, the Indian tribes, and the negroes who were held in bondage.” The same principle has been recognised by respectable Prelates of the national Church ; particularly by Bishop Gibson ; and by Bishop Porteus, the founder of the Society for the Conversion and Instruction of the Negroes in the British West India islands ; by the House of Lords, in 1788, which adopted a motion by Lord Bathurst, for an Address to His Majesty, “to instruct the Governors of the islands to secure, by some legislative measure, a better treatment of the slaves, and provide for their religious instruction ;” and in the last session of Parliament, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who pledged himself that “the Church of England would give the subject all proper attention.”

That a principle so often sanctioned, and by such high authority, has been so greatly inoperative, none can more seriously lament than the writer, and the persons with whom he acts, in the management of the Wesleyan Missions ; and if it shall appear, by what follows, that the great majority

of the negro slaves in the colonies remain to this day without any religious instruction whatever, this fact is advanced for no invidious purpose, but in defence of those Missions which, of late, have been so grossly and unjustly attacked, and in the hope, that the rising spirit of Missionary zeal which now animates so considerable and so respectable a portion of the Church of England, and other religious bodies, may be exerted to apply its energies to the cultivation of a soil which has seldom been ungrateful in its returns to the Missionary labourer, and which every consideration of civil fraternity, and of affecting destitution, binds the English nation to encourage.

The West India islands have not, however, been wholly neglected. If no efficient legislative provision has been adopted for the Christianizing of their slave population, it has been attempted by the spontaneous zeal of several Christian Societies, and with a success, which, though far from rendering larger exertions unnecessary, will ever be contemplated by Christians of every religious persuasion with the highest satisfaction. The Society founded by Bishop Porteus has two Missionaries employed in this work. The Moravians commenced their labours in the Danish West India islands in 1732; in Jamaica, in 1754; in Antigua, in 1756; and in St. Kitt's, in 1775. The efforts of the Wesleyan Methodists commenced in Antigua in 1760; and from 1786, when four Missionaries visited that island, they began to spread over the British colonies, in most of which they have raised societies, congregations, and places of worship, and now employ thirty-nine Missionaries. The Baptists have three Missionaries in Jamaica; and the London Missionary Society have lately occupied stations in Demerara, Berbice, and Trinidad. In this work, all who have long exerted themselves have had to toil through great difficulties, and to make the most painful sacrifices. The result of their united efforts, however, is, that probably more than two hundred thousand negroes and people of colour enjoy, either as members of religious societies, or as hearers of the Preachers of different denominations, the benefits of religious instruction. For this work of patriotism and benevolence, the rewards which the Missionaries have in many

cases met with, have been opposition and persecution abroad, and calumny at home. "But their judgment is with the Lord, and their work with their God."

I.—OCCASION OF THIS WORK.

IN the opposition and reproach just mentioned, the Wesleyan Missionaries in the West Indies had at all times their full share; but in whatever proportion it was formerly dealt to the respective parties, they have, of late, been singled out as special objects of attack. The alarm produced by the insurrection of the slaves in Barbadoes, has encouraged the enemies of Missions to attempt to bring the Missionary system itself into discredit, by falsely charging that catastrophe upon Methodist Missionaries. That refuted, they have charged it upon the Registry Bill, and the African Institution; and as the Methodist Missionaries have been gratuitously, but as they will think not dishonourably, assumed to be in some way connected with the African Institution, and to be the agents of its views, the ill-temper which the agitation of the Registry Bill question has excited in the colonies, and among many persons interested in them at home, has expressed itself in the most illiberal and unfounded charges upon men who, wholly unconnected with politics, and pursuing the "noiseless tenor of their way," in the instruction of the negroes, for the most part never heard of that measure, till it was held up to public execration in the West Indies. Again: The almost forgotten charges of seditious preaching, nocturnal assemblies, and attempts to excite the slaves to insurrection, have been revived with corroborated positiveness. The council of St. Vincent recommends to the House of Assembly, to frame an Act for the better regulation of the Methodist Mission in that Government; and that House pledges itself to obviate, as much as possible, by its co-operation in the framing and executing of laws, "the baneful and pestilent doctrines of certain Methodist Missionaries." A charge is delivered to

the Grand Jury at the General Court of Quarter Sessions, held at Titchfield, Jamaica, in July, to impress upon the gentlemen of the jury the necessity of guarding, both in their public and private capacity, against itinerating Missionaries, “ who may be contemptible hypocrites, who may be ill-disposed enthusiasts ; inflaming the minds, and alienating their hearers from their duties and employments.” A number of pamphlets, written at home, reiterate the same calumnies in every form and colour ; and the writers add such observations of their own to heighten the effect, as nothing but the greatest ignorance of the case could dictate, but which that ignorance cannot certainly excuse. Mr. Marryatt misrepresents the case of Mr. Talboys, a Wesleyan Missionary, to justify, without any exception, the colonial Legislatures from the charge of “ having very materially checked the charitable zeal of those who would have communicated freely the beneficent light of the Gospel to the poor pagan bondsmen of our colonies.” A Scottish colonist affirms, “ that the ignorant Methodists preach darkness and confusion ; that dark fanaticism, which, sent to illuminate ignorance, infallibly tends to make their disciples either madmen or murderers ; such men the colonies reject, and will reject.” These attacks, with more or less violence, are repeated by every writer who has entered into the controversy on the same side ; and the whole is concentrated and periodically dispensed in the pages of the Quarterly Colonial Journal, and certain of the London newspapers.

If the opponents of the Wesleyan Missions had been silenced by the ample and explicit refutation of the charges of Mr. Barham in the last session of Parliament, and the testimony borne by His Majesty’s Ministers to the peaceable demeanour and useful labours of the Methodist Missionaries, their friends might have been excused from obtruding a defence of them upon the public ; but the same malignity and falsehood are in full activity to the present hour, and the exculpation of men who have hazarded their personal safety and reputation, from motives the most disinterested, and for objects the most important which the human mind can contemplate, can be no longer delayed. If that defence should necessarily

require statements as to the moral state of the colonies, the conduct of some of the colonists, and the intolerance of some colonial Legislatures, which may be displeasing to the anti-Mission party, let it be remembered, that they have put the Methodist Missions on their trial before the public; that what is here adduced is on the part of the defendant; that the Methodist Missionaries have borne undeserved reproaches in silence for many years; and that they speak only when it is attempted to blast the fair fruit of their sacrifices and labours, by incitements to persecuting laws, and legislative restrictions, uncalled for by a single instance of proved misconduct, and opposed also to the benevolent wishes, and acknowledged interests, of many very respectable colonists themselves. This defence will chiefly consist of facts and statements, confirmed by the evidence of Methodist Missionaries, who either, after having resided several years in different islands, are now in England, (some of them having very recently returned,) or of those who are now actually employed there; and, it may be necessary to mention, that these statements were obtained from them in answer to certain queries, drawn up by order of the Managing Committee of the Wesleyan Missions in London, and sent to such of the Missionaries as were thought, from their opportunities of observation whilst in the West Indies, able to speak the most explicitly on the various subjects embodied in them. The answers were given by persons in different parts of the kingdom, who had no concert with each other; and the evidence in their letters is such as they will, if necessary, personally verify in any place or mode the opposers of the Mission may appoint.

II.—MORAL CONDITION OF THE UNINSTRUCTED NEGROES.

To ascertain the necessity and importance of any Mission, it is necessary to inquire into the state of religious knowledge and morals among the people for whose benefit it is established. It is ignorance which renders instruction necessary, and vice

which calls for the hallowing influences of the Christian system. The deeper the degradation of the state, the more necessary the application of those means which alone can exalt it, and the greater is the glory of the success, when that is achieved. It is, however, almost sufficient, in the case of the colonial negroes, to mark their religious and moral condition, to advert to the circumstance, that they were imported from Western Africa, or descended from a race originally brought from thence. The knowledge of God is, perhaps, more nearly extinguished in that part of Africa, than in any other part of the pagan world. The religion of the Africans, if religion it may be called, is of the most uncouth and unseemly kind. If it influence at all, it influences by terror ; yet not so much the sublime terrors which have given a certain impressive grandeur to other pagan systems, as the terrors of evil spirits, of bugbears, and of conjuration. It is a singular and affecting fact, that where the knowledge of God is lost, the tradition of a devil is yet preserved, and heightened by the gloomy colourings of superstition ; that he has his altars, and his votaries, who endeavour to propitiate his malignity, and purchase an exemption from his power.* Thus it is in Africa :

* The Africans all acknowledge a Supreme Being ; but they suppose him endowed with too much benevolence to do harm to mankind ; and therefore think it unnecessary to offer him any homage. It is from demons, or evil spirits only, that they apprehend danger ; and they endeavour to deprecate their wrath by sacrifice and offerings. These demons are divided by the Bulloms and Timmanees into a superior and inferior order ; the former inhabit chiefly the deepest recesses of the forest, and are called by the Bulloms *Ay-min*, and by the Timmanees *Ma-mull*. The precise spot where they dwell is supposed to be indicated by a cluster of the nests of the smaller termites (ants). Many other places are dedicated to these spirits, which are generally such as to inspire the spectator with awe.

Before they begin to sow their plantations, they sacrifice a sheep, goat, fowl, or fish to the *Ay-min*, to beg that their crop may abound. Other spirits of that class preside over the water. To these they sacrifice as to the former. In both instances, only a small part of the sacrifice is left for the demons, the remainder being eaten by their votaries. When they see the *Bug-a-bugs* (the ants) carrying away the meat, they imagine they are conveying it to the spirits. The inferior order of demons is called by the Bulloms *Pom-mull*, and by the Timmanees *Griffee* ; they commonly reside in the skirts of the town, and sometimes dwell in the midst of it. Every person is supposed to

They tremble, not before God, but before demons ; whilst their belief in witchcraft gives every man, more artful than his fellow-savages, the opportunity of gratifying his malice or his avarice, and brings the minds of the multitude under the bondage of fears, which often embitter and waste existence ; and, in all cases, break the tone, and debase and corrupt the feelings of the mind. This is the religion of the negro slaves in the West Indies. The following are the representations of several of the Wesleyan Missionaries on this subject :—

MR. PATTISON.

PREVIOUS to the introduction of the Gospel by Moravian and Methodist Missionaries, the negroes were in a state of inconceivable darkness and diabolical superstition.

MR. GILGRASS.

THE whole of their theology, if I may so call it, consists in a confused notion of "somebody at top." But their notions of him have not the least tendency to restrain their vicious propensities. The following conversations which I had with some of them will inform you respecting their superstitions. The first occurred in Barbadoes, in 1804. Early one morning I was going through the heathen (unbaptized) burying-ground, my attention was arrested by an old female slave, sitting upon a grave, eating out of a calabash. I approached her, and said, "What are you doing?" "Massa, me feed dead." "Who is buried here?" "Me sissa." (Sister, a name used in common for all females.) "Can the dead eat?" "Yes, Sir." "But are you not eating, not the dead?" "Yes, Massa, but dead eat too." "Where do you expect to go after death?" "Me no know;" but after a pause said, "to great Massa." "What do you think great

have one of these to himself as a tutelary spirit, to which he never sacrifices, except in case of sickness. Those who inhabit the town have no animal sacrifices made to them ; but when liquor is brought, it is never drunk until a small portion is poured into a cup or broken bottle, and set apart for *Griffe*. A small house or shed, about three or four feet high, is built for both kinds of demons in the forest, or in the path which leads to the landing-place, or close to the town ; and under each shed is placed an ants' nest.

The Seosoos imagine, when a child is born, that its body has been taken possession of by the soul of some person lately deceased.

As we advance to the southward of Sierra-Leone, superstition appears to acquire greater power and multiformity, and the objects to which a degree of religious worship is paid, increase astonishingly.—DR. WINTERBOTTHAM'S *Account of the Native Africans, &c.*

Massa is like?" "He be one good Massa." "Don't you know he is not a man?" "Massa, if he no man, what he then be?"

In Jamaica and other islands, the friends of the deceased scattered food upon the grave.

The second conversation I had with an Obeah man, a negro wizard, in Jamaica. I found him in his hut, and said, "Have you ever prayed?" "No!" and laughed. Seeing an angle, I said, "Do you catch fish with this?" "Yes, Sir." "When you catch fish, do you thank God?" "Yes, Sir." "But when you don't catch fish, what then?" "Me curse him." "What, curse God?" "Yes;" and laughed aloud. "Don't you know God made you? You should pray to him." "Massa, what me pray for? Him make me, me no help it." "Have you seen the devil, as you say?" "Yes, Sir, he come every night." "How do you call him?" "Me beat dese sticks," four bamboos.

The third conversation I had in St. Vincent's, in 1812. Being overtaken in a storm, I took refuge in a watchman's hut, and began a conversation, in the course of which I asked him the following questions: "When you die, to what place will you go?" "Massa," (surprised,) "how me know?" "Shall you go to your own country?" "Me no know." As to this particular, there appears a great difference among the negroes; some believe it, and others not. "Do you think there is a God?" "Me heary dem say so," meaning the religious negroes. "Do you go to church?" "Massa, how me go church? me no have time, me work;" on the Sunday. "Tell me what you think of the next world." "Me no know; me heary say me shall eat, drink, play, and sleep." He had been on the island many years.

MR. DIXON.

I BELIEVE the negroes had no true knowledge of God, either as Creator, Governor, or Judge. Of course they had no inward principle of religion to restrain them from the gratification of any sinful desire.

MR. FISH.

THE minds of the negroes, previous to their instruction by Missionaries, are exceeding dark. They have but faint ideas of what is called natural religion; and though, from living in the islands, they hear the name of Christ, they know nothing of his doctrines. Very few are the exceptions.

MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR.

THE condition of the negroes with respect to religious knowledge, before they came under the care of the Missionaries, was the most

abject. Generally speaking, they were destitute of all knowledge of God, his attributes, his worship, and the duties they owed to him, to each other, and themselves; and a superstition, by which they pretended to have intercourse with diabolical agency, subjected them to mental horrors.

MR. BROWNELL.

THE negroes may be divided into two classes; such as are employed as house servants, and such as are engaged in the work of the estates: The former had a little knowledge, from their intercourse with white people. The state of the field-negroes was deplorable indeed. I will not say that they had no idea of the being of a God, or of the immortality of the soul; but the traces of these doctrines were so faint, as to have little or no effect upon their moral conduct. They believed in the existence of spirits, which they called *Jumbees*, and sometimes spread victuals on the graves of those who were recently dead, that their spirits might return and eat. I have often seen the graves made up with lime and stone in the form of a coffin, and a small earthen cup placed on the breast, for the purpose of containing meat or drink. They were so exceedingly degraded, debased, and vicious, that many doubted whether they had immortal souls; and I myself have thought, that some of them differed very little from the cattle of the field, except in the possibility of being raised from the ruins of their fall.

A state of ignorance so deplorable, in which scarcely an indistinct idea of God can be traced, in which no notion of moral obligation seems to exist, and no such views of a future state are entertained, as can exert any moral restraint, originates, as a necessary consequence, all the vices which human nature, left without the corrections of truth, is disposed to perpetrate. The knowledge which the public has obtained of the true state of the world, renders it now impossible to give currency to the idle dream, or the artful invention, of the virtues of pagan people; much less is it now possible to cheat mankind with tales of the virtues of savage and uncivilized Pagans.

The above statements are sufficient to show the utter ignorance of the negroes of every religious truth which can give comfort to man, or regulate his conduct; the following will show the effects of that ignorance upon their morals, and be

the strongest demonstration of the necessity of using the most zealous efforts to remove it :—

MR. WARRENER.

THE uninstructed negroes were but little above the beasts that perish ; they were grossly intemperate, and taught their children to lie and steal from infancy.

MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR.

THEIR reigning sins were lying, stealing, drunkenness, and uncleanness ; drinking and dancing whole nights, so as often to render them incapable of labouring the next day.

MR. PATTISON.

THEY were generally intemperate, as far as the means of it were within their reach. This contributed to lassitude and idleness ; and their labour was generally extorted from them by the cow-skin, or other modes of punishment : And as slavery, combined with ignorance, has a tendency to debase the mind, there were to be found but few traces of fidelity ; so that between the slave and the holder there were but few instances of mutual confidence.

MR. GILGRASS.

THE dispositions of the slaves appear radically bad : Both sexes are intemperate, laying no restraint upon their turbulent passions and appetites. The intercourse between the sexes is very promiscuous. They are not diligent, their labour being wholly extorted by fear ; they are greatly addicted to theft, and few believe it theft to purloin from their masters.

MR. DIXON.

THEY indulged in every sinful desire, and were neither diligent nor faithful, but as compelled by the whip.

MR. FISH.

MANY of them shorten their days by intemperance in drinking. The charges of laziness and want of fidelity are not without foundation.

MR. CAMPBELL.

THEIR moral condition was greatly debased, particularly as it respects promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, which was so general, that there was little, if any, shame attached to it. Diligence had no stimulant but the fear and presence of the driver ; and fidelity

was in general neither practised by the slaves, nor expected by their masters. Lying, theft, and sloth are habitual.

MR. BROWNELL.

ALMOST all the male negroes were very fond of rum, and of course would be intoxicated whenever it was in their power. Drunkenness, lying, stealing, and especially lasciviousness, were reigning sins ; nor would they work or be faithful in any way, except from the fear of punishment.

Such is the only true picture which can be drawn of the uninstructed negroes. The enemies of Missions will not charge us with exaggerating it, to enhance the necessity of such undertakings. These are the complaints which the holders of slaves have ever made against them ; in many instances to excuse their own severities, and palliate their contempt. With little reason, however, have such of them so complained as have withheld the only means of removing these vices, or opposed their application. All their immoralities have been proved vincible by the power of true Christianity. The character drawn by the Missionaries is the character of the neglected African ; that it continues his character, is less his fault than the crime of those who, by commanding him to remain ignorant, have commanded him to remain vicious, and whose example has not always had a corrective influence.*

The representation stands up to dishonour our country, and to shame our indifference. It would disgust the morality of a British public, were not the feeling turned into pity, by the consideration that those who are guilty of the habits ascribed to them, have long lived under a Christian Government, laboured for professed Christian masters, and yet have been denied the knowledge of a religion, which, by its reproofs, would

* One Sunday morning, as I was riding out in Antigua to preach, I saw a gang of negroes, hired for the purpose, digging cane-holes in the fields. I knew the manager, and sometimes lodged in his house. I rode to his door, and said, "Do you think the negroes without all understanding ? If you teach them to break one command, 'Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy,' for your gain, they will break another for their own, 'Thou shalt not steal.' " He acknowledged it was wrong ; but Mr. _____ would have it so.—MR. WARRENER.

at least have rendered shameful what is now shameless, and driven that into secret which now affronts the open day. Much would have been corrected ; and the success of the labours of Missionaries has proved, as will appear in its proper place, that much would have been cured.

The state of marriage, or rather the absence of that institution, among the uninstructed slaves, deserves a distinct consideration. It is a dark trait in the condition of the negro of the West Indies, which it is too important to contemplate separately to be merged in the general view. To say that marriage is almost unknown among them, is to express, in one word, what appeals more forcibly to the heart than would a volume of descriptive degradation. If marriage be a relation which the wisest Governments have ever encouraged, which every religion has consecrated by prescribing its ceremonies, and the rights and duties of which all enlightened Legislatures have guarded by strict enactments, it is to be concluded that they have considered it as intimately bound up with the happiness and morality of society. No persons, at least, professing any respect for the laws of this country, or reverence for the Christian faith, can doubt this ; nor can any institution exert so powerful an influence to tame the savage mind, and soften it into man, when encouraged on Christian principles, and guarded by Christian sanctions. Then it is that animal appetite is elevated into affection ; and that man, feeling an individual interest in the family which surrounds him, resigns himself to those kind instincts which nature has fixed in the breast of a parent, and feels a motive to exert himself for the benefit of his children. Domestic affections soften his feelings, and prompt his industry ; character then, for the first time, acquires a value with him ; he has a stake in society, and an interest in its peace and improvement. The sum of public virtue is in fact made up of domestic virtue, and may be estimated by it : Nor are there any civil virtues which have not had their birth and infant play upon the domestic hearth. That this institution, which policy alone might have been supposed sufficient to encourage, has been denied the colonial slave, is a subject of serious reflection ; for though not gene-

rally known in this country, yet the fact is, that many hundred thousands of slaves in British colonies have been left, and are still left, to herd together like the cattle; to change mates as often as they are prompted by appetite or resentment; and that the relation of husband and wife has been scarcely known among them, except where the Missionaries have laboured, or a few Christian planters have encouraged more permanent connexions.

It does not clearly appear whether the slaves are legally prohibited to marry in all the islands. If this be the case in any of them, the matter is still worse; for then the present practice of promiscuous intercourse, or indefinite polygamy, is urged upon them by the very sanction of law. It is only, however, in a few instances that slaves have been married according to the established forms of law, by the Clergy; nor has any thing equivalent to that ceremony been introduced. It is scarcely to be supposed, that, as the slaves may be sold to different islands or estates, and separated from each other, the colonists have been prevented from introducing marriage, by the fear of putting man and wife asunder; when, in so many instances they part, by their sales, not merely man and wife, brother and sister, but mother and infant.* Nor can

* Dr. Pinckard, in his Notes on the West Indies, gives some affecting anecdotes of this kind; but none of them can exceed the following heart-rending relation, by Mr. Gilgrass:—“A master of slaves, who lived near us in Kingston, Jamaica, exercised his barbarities on a Sabbath morning, while we were worshipping God in the chapel; and the cries of the female sufferers have frequently interrupted us in our devotions. But there was no redress for them or for us. This man wanted money; and one of the female slaves having two fine children, he sold one of them; and the child was torn from her maternal affection. In the agony of her feelings, she made a hideous howling; and for that crime was flogged. Soon after, he sold her other child. This ‘turned her heart within her,’ and impelled her into a kind of madness. She howled night and day in the yard, tore her hair, ran up and down the streets and the parade, rending the heavens with her cries, and literally watering the earth with her tears. Her constant cry was, ‘Da wicked Massa Jew, he sell me children. Will no Buckra Massa pity nega? What me do? Me no have one child.’ As she stood before my window, she said, ‘My Massa,’ lifting up her hands towards heaven, ‘do me, Massa Minister, pity me? Me heart do so,’ shaking herself violently, ‘me heart do so, because me have no child. Me go a Massa house, in Massa yard, and in

the impossibility of bringing the negroes themselves to submit to marriage be fairly pleaded, when the colonists have had before them, in the case of the negroes instructed by Missionaries, so many contrary proofs, and when there have been some instances of even uninstructed negroes, in whom affection has triumphed over example and caprice, and who have lived together in mutual fidelity to old age.* The cause is to be traced both to the habits of the slaves, incorrigible generally, except by means which some of their masters will not adopt ; and to that contempt which many of the whites have for their black fellow-men. A distinction of caste, often more austere, and more productive of bad feeling to the inferior, exists in the West India colonies, than is to be found in Hindostan. There are whites who laugh at the idea of introducing marriage among negroes, and who take so mean a measure of the capacity of the slave for moral improvement, as to suppose him incapable of understanding or observing its duties, and too licentious to be corrected by any moral process whatever.

Usually, when the masters have at all interfered to discourage the promiscuous intercourse of the slaves, it has been because of its operating as a check to population, and, consequently, contrary to their interests. Their attempts, as will appear in a subsequent extract from a colonial document, have been of little avail ; nor will the evil be remedied, but by that instruction which can only prepare them for the introduction of marriage, and secure its general observance.

To bring this subject more fully before the public, the fol-

me hut, and me no see em ;' and then her cry went up—to God. I durst not be seen looking at her."

"I knew an instance of a negro and his wife being sold to different islands, after living together twenty-four years, and raising a family of children."—**MR. BRADNACK.**

* "In St. Thomas's, Jamaica," says Mr. Gilgrass, "I married an old couple who had lived together fifty years. They were about eighty years old, and good impressions having been made on them, they desired to join our society. Being informed they must first be married, they readily consented. After the ceremony, the old man said, "Me love my old woman with a child's love ; and me tank you, Massa, for marrying we. Massa, we no know we do wrong before you good Massa come among us."

lowing question, with the answers given to it, is subjoined. It was proposed by the Committee, as before stated, to a number of its Missionaries. The answers of all are so similar, that it is only necessary to introduce a few of them. They will both substantiate the facts just stated, and present an interesting view of one of the many good effects of Missionary labours, in improving the moral state of the slave population.

Is marriage common among the slaves who have not been instructed by Methodist or other Missionaries? And in what manner do the Missionaries marry the slaves under their care?

MR. WARRENER.

WHEN a man and woman had lived together before they joined our society, we entered them as man and wife on our books, brought them to one of the meetings, gave them an address on the duties of the married state, or read the form of matrimony in Mr. Wesley's abridgment of the liturgy.

MR. PATTISON.

MARRIAGE is not common among the slaves; and, from a desire to interfere as little as possible with the policy of the country, and to give those who would oppose the Gospel as little advantage against us as possible, (as their jealousy and suspicion are ever awake,) there has been no regular form of matrimony adopted by the Missionaries. My manner was, in order to introduce the institution, and prevent the sin of polygamy, to advert to the original institution of marriage, in as inoffensive a way as possible, first, to preach against the sin of polygamy, and to inform the slaves, that, on becoming or continuing members of our society, they must confine themselves to each other till death should separate them; and when they have submitted to this, I have appointed them to attend me. I then explained to them the nature of the marriage covenant, and the blessings resulting from its observance. They then kneeled down; I took their hands, and united them together, and desired them to repeat after me, "I, Quamina, take thee, Quasheba, to be my wife; and I promise to leave all others, and cleave to thee alone as long as it shall please God we both shall live." I then loosed their hands, joined them again, and the woman plighted her faith. We concluded the service with prayer.

MR. GILGRASS.

MARRIAGE does not exist among the slaves not instructed by Missionaries. They herd together, like the cattle of the field, without any ceremony, when both are willing. Some live together many

years ; others soon part, and each chooses a new companion. Marriage is uniformly introduced by the Missionaries.

MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR.

I do not recollect an instance where slaves have been joined together in any way analogous to the form of marriage, except those who had been instructed by Methodist or other Missionaries. The Methodist Missionaries, after inquiring of the parties to be joined together, if they were free from any prior engagement, and having consulted their parents or friends on the subject, gave them suitable directions, in the presence of witnesses, before whom they agreed to take each other as man and wife.

MR. BROWNELL.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS MARRIAGE, IN OUR SENSE OF THE WORD, AMONG THE SLAVES ; AND THE TERMS "MARRIAGE" AND "HUSBAND" APPEARED DEGRADED, IN THE ESTIMATION OF MANY WHITES, WHEN APPLIED TO NEGROES. THE WOMAN DID NOT CALL THE MAN HUSBAND ; BUT SHE SAID, "ME HAVE MAN." TO KNOW HOW TO ACT IN THE CASE OF MARRIAGE WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE MISSIONARIES HAD TO ENCOUNTER. THEY WERE FREQUENTLY AT A LOSS TO DETERMINE WHICH WAS THE PROPER HUSBAND OR WIFE. FOR INSTANCE : A FEMALE WISHED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF SOCIETY ; BUT WAS THE MAN WITH WHOM SHE WAS THEN LIVING THE FIRST SHE HAD AGREED WITH ? NO ; SHE HAD LIVED WITH MANY OTHERS ; AND THE FIRST MAN WITH WHOM SHE WAS CONNECTED HAD HAD MANY MORE WOMEN SINCE HE LEFT HER, AND PERHAPS WAS LIVING WITH ONE AT THAT TIME BY WHOM HE HAD SEVERAL CHILDREN. SOMETIMES THE MISSIONARIES WERE CONTENT WITH AN ENGAGEMENT, THAT THE WOMAN WOULD ABIDE WITH THE MAN SHE HAD, WHEN SHE JOINED THE SOCIETY ; AT OTHER TIMES, THEY ACTED TO THE BEST OF THEIR JUDGMENT IN SELECTING THE PERSON WHOM THEY THOUGHT MOST PROPER. I HAVE MARRIED A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER ACCORDING TO THE FORM IN MR. WESLEY'S ABRIDGMENT OF THE LITURGY ; BUT NO UNIFORM FORM OF MARRIAGE WAS INTRODUCED BEFORE I LEFT THE WEST INDIES. ONLY WE OBLIGED, AS FAR AS LAY IN OUR POWER, ONE MAN TO KEEP TO THE WOMAN HE HAD CHOSEN ; AND IF HE DEPARTED FROM HIS REPUTED WIFE, HE WAS EXPELLED THE SOCIETY ; AND THE WOMAN IN THE SAME MANNER.

If this evidence should be deemed partial, the following extract from a Report of a Committee of the House of Assembly in Jamaica, relative to the Registry Bill, dated December, 1815, will corroborate it to its full extent ; and it ought also to be noticed, that the evident object of this Report is, to place the condition of the slaves, in every particular, in its

most favourable light. Speaking of the disproportion of the male to the female slaves in Jamaica, the Reporters observe:—

This evil produces another; a greater degree of promiscuous intercourse, and more difficulty in correcting it by rewards or punishments. It is unnecessary to state how unfavourable this condition of society is to a natural increase. The young women are averse to any restraints on their pleasures and profits; and often have recourse to means for procuring abortion, until they become unable to carry children for the full period of gestation. The principal male negroes are equally disinclined to allow their masters to interfere with their connexions. From previous habitudes, it cannot, with any propriety, be made an object of punishment, and rewards have hitherto failed to produce any considerable effect.

III.—MEANS OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION INADEQUATE IN THE WEST INDIES.

COULD we see any symptoms of real sympathy with the moral degradation of the negroes, in the opposers of the West India Missions in general; were there any indications of regret for past neglect, and any active preparation for future reparation; it might be prudent to drop the curtain on the past, and even to veil the present neglected state of the slaves. But the case does not admit of it. The only persons who have endeavoured in earnest to enlighten the minds and raise the condition of the black and coloured population, are still treated by this party in the most opprobrious manner; and the show which is made of promoting religion by other agents and means is only to deceive the British public, and excuse the negligent part of the colonists themselves. It is not, indeed, meant to involve all the colonists in this censure. It will be seen, in the sequel, that a great number of planters and others, in different islands, have given the greatest encouragement and sanction to Methodist and other Missions; and that they have remained their firm friends for many years, from their experience of the good effects resulting from their labours. This

is stated, once for all, lest any thing said in this work should be construed into indiscriminate censure. It is also very cordially believed, from encouragement given to Missions by so many of the whites, that, were the means of instruction multiplied by the Methodists and other parties, and by the Church of England, many other planters and owners of slaves would avail themselves of the opportunity to have their slaves instructed. It is also thankfully acknowledged, that, in general, the persons placed at the head of the Executive Governments of the islands, faithful to the firm attachment to religious toleration, so uniformly exemplified by the venerable Sovereign whom they represented, and to their instructions from Ministers at home, have discouraged all attempts at legal persecution. But it cannot be disguised, that, in many islands, and more especially in Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, and, above all, in Jamaica, there has been a powerful and active party, who, to the bitterest religious intolerance, have added all those colonial jealousies and prejudices which oppose formidable barriers to such benevolent undertakings. They have been averse to the instruction of the blacks, from considerations which have had with them the force of principle; and though policy dictates to them, to direct their fulminations against the "enthusiastic and fanatic" Methodists and Dissenters, this work, before its close, will contain sufficient evidence, that even they are not so much the objects of this violence, as the work in which they engage; and that the few attempts made by the Establishment itself to Christianize the negroes, have been met with equal discountenance or resistance.

This policy of the anti-Mission party, in singling out Methodists and Dissenters as objects of exclusive hostility, has, however, led them to concede something of which the friends of religion may very justly avail themselves. It is one constant result in the controversy between truth and error, justice and interest, that long before the former work out their practical ends, they win the ground of principles, and clear for themselves a wider area for the combat. Charges of wrong are first denied; but it is acknowledged that, if true, the

wrong ought to be remedied. The wrong proved, “the correcting measure is carried too far,” but it is partially admitted. The whole is finally consented to, though with reluctance, as matter of right, but “the time is not come,” or the work must be effected by “other means.” Step by step the field is won, and the triumph of right in principle is succeeded by its triumph in practice. Thus the abolition of the importation slave-trade was carried; and the triumph of the cause of negro instruction cannot be despaired of, when the first stages in this process are already passed, and as long as the superior light, benevolence, and moral feeling of this country shall continue to be exerted on its foreign dependencies.

It may be well therefore to review the concessions which have been wrung from the opponents of Missions in the colonies. Whether those concessions have been sincerely yielded, or not, is another part of the inquiry; but they have been made. It is too much now for even a West India colonist, of the class we allude to, to assert that negroes have not souls; that they are incapable of religion; that they need no instruction; and that the attempt would be fruitless.

The first concession which shall be noticed is found in the Act passed in Jamaica in 1807, which followed a persecuting law against the Missionaries, and was considered as a clause belonging to the Consolidated Slave Laws. This law enacts, “That from after the commencing of this Act, all masters and mistresses, owners, or, in their absence, overseers, of slaves, shall, as much as in them lies, endeavour the instruction of their slaves in the principles of the Christian religion, whereby to facilitate their conversion, and shall do their utmost endeavours to fit them for baptism; and, as soon as conveniently they can, cause to be baptized all such as they can make sensible of a Deity, and the Christian faith.” On this no remark shall at present be made, except that it is evident, that, as late as 1807, the slaves were generally ignorant of “a Deity and the Christian faith;” and that, after this provision for their instruction, the Legislature of Jamaica cannot consistently urge the danger or hopelessness of attempts to instruct the negroes. The other concession is earlier in date, and may

be copied from the Report of the Committee of the House of Assembly, admitted in December, 1815, and before mentioned.

In the year 1797 an Act passed the Legislature of this island, imposing it as a duty on the Rector of every parish, to set apart a portion of time on each Sunday for instructing such slaves as were willing to become Christians. Considerable numbers have profited from these instructions. In most cases the masters encourage, none oppose, the wishes of the slaves to attend.

The concession here is, that Christian instruction is “profitable” to the slaves.

The third concession is in favour of even Missions. The Methodist Missions are abundantly censured; but “the Moravians,” says the Report, “have been received for more than half a century.” Thus, also, the favour bestowed upon the Moravian Missions is pleaded, by the Colonial Journal, No. II., page 311, against the charge of religious intolerance urged against a part of the colonists. On this distinction between the Methodist and Moravian Missions, some remarks will be hereafter made; in the mean time, it is accepted as a concession in favour of Missions discriminately.

The last concession is from Mr. Marryat, who, in his “Thoughts on Abolition,” &c., adduces the answers of the Governors of the different West India colonies, who were required to send returns of the number of parochial or other cures of the Clergy of the Church of England resident in their different Governments. “These Reports,” he observes, “collectively considered, amply vindicate the inhabitants of the West India colonies, from the charge brought against them of being adverse or indifferent to the cause of Christianity;” and also that “they fully disprove the assertion, that any spirit of intolerance is shown towards even the sectarian Preachers; but prove, on the contrary, that they are only interfered with when, like Mr. Talboys, they preach doctrines which endanger the security of the white inhabitants, by exciting the negroes to disaffection and revolt.” The remarks on these documents, and Mr. Talboys’s case, will have another

place assigned them ; but the concessions made by Mr. Marryat are, that the colonists might be justly blamed were they “ adverse or indifferent to the cause of Christianity ;” and if they “ showed any spirit of intolerance towards even sectarian Preachers,” who do not preach dangerous doctrines.

These are concessions of principle, which ought to be kept in mind ; but it now remains to be considered whether, in the colonies, they have been brought into sufficient practice. They are adduced by the anti-Mission party to show that the negroes have not been neglected in their spiritual concerns ; to prove Missions less necessary than they are assumed to be ; and, by Mr. Marryat expressly, to rebut a charge made by the friends of the Registry Bill, that “ the Colonial Legislatures have opposed positive prohibitions to the only attainable means of religious instruction and worship, and have materially checked the charitable zeal of those who would have communicated freely the beneficent light of the Gospel to the poor pagan bondsmen of our colonies.” They shall therefore be examined in order.

The first is the clause attached to the Consolidated Slave Laws in Jamaica, in Nov., 1807. It is to be observed, that this Act followed a persecuting law passed in the June preceding, of such a character as to justify the Edinburgh Review in saying of the Jamaica colonists, that “ they have again and again interposed to prevent the black population from receiving religious instruction in the only form in which it can reach them, as things are at present constituted, namely, by Missionary Preachers. Acts were regularly, and in all the forms, passed, to stop by main force all such attempts at illuminating the hundreds of thousands of their pagan subjects.” It ought to be noticed also, that this Act itself rendered every “ Methodist Missionary, or other sectary, or Preacher,” liable to a fine of twenty pounds for every slave proved to have been in “ their houses, chapels, or conventicles,” for the purpose of attending their instructions. After such a prohibition of the only means of moral culture the slaves enjoyed, it was natural to suppose that they would make a show of providing for their instruction by other means. That it was a mere

show is, however, the melancholy fact ; for even now it would be difficult to prove that the slaves, not instructed by " Methodist Missionaries, or other sectaries, or Preachers," have any more knowledge of a " Deity, or of the Christian faith," than they had before. On this subject, however, the testimony of a most respectable Missionary, (Mr. Fish,) who spent many years in that island, may be adduced. In his letter to the Committee, he adverts to this Act in the following terms :—

When the law to prohibit preaching, in 1807, took place, Samuel V——, Esq., whose negroes were under the instruction of a Baptist Preacher, by his own desire, being in company with John P——, Esq., a Member of the Assembly, and a Judge of the Supreme Court, he asked him, " Pray, Sir, what was the clause of the Consolidated Slave Act, recommending the instruction of the negroes by their owners, &c., made for ?" Mr. P—— replied, " O, that was made *for England*," meaning, to blind the people of this country. The habitual, and I may say almost universal, neglect of that law, from the time it was made, proves that Mr. P——'s assertion was a true one.

It is equally probable that the law of 1797 was made " for England" also ; and equally as certain, that, whatever ends might be answered by its enactment, no benefit of consequence was derived from it by the slaves. It is true, that the Report of 1815 affirms, that " considerable numbers profited by these instructions" of the Rectors ; but if we doubt this statement of a Committee of the House of Assembly in Jamaica, we must be pardoned. Their prejudices are to be taken into account ; and though we are far from charging them with uttering what they knew to be incorrect, there is sufficient evidence to show, that, in most matters respecting religion, that House has acted upon the information of men who have, in many instances, paid no attention to truth whatever ; and by such informers that Assembly has been grossly misled, and its confidence abused. The Act of 1797, and that of 1807, are also so much at variance, that the efficient operation of the former cannot for a moment be admitted. If the Sunday instructions of such slaves as were willing to attend (for, on

their own showing, they were not sought for, nor influenced to attend) had been so effective, that “considerable numbers had profited by them,” where, then, was the necessity of recommending it to owners, &c., to instruct their slaves in the knowledge of a Deity in 1807? If the former Act had been in efficient operation for ten years, its fruits must have been sufficiently visible to the House, to have led them to recommend to the owners of slaves to encourage their attendance on the Rectors, rather than have adopted new provisions for a purpose so apparently provided for; and it is still more strange that, in the preamble to a law prohibiting slaves, under penalties, from attending the instructions of any Missionary, they should not have justified it, by the plea, that instruction was already provided for them in the established Church, rather than pass it without any reference to such an institution, and colour it by affecting to provide other and safer means of obtaining that end than were then attainable. The truth appears to be, that in the lapse of ten years the law had been forgotten; that it became defunct soon after its birth; and that it was only revived in the Report of 1815, to be wielded in the Registry Bill controversy, and brandished against charges similar to those made in the Edinburgh Review.

On this subject, however, we have more than strong probability to advance. The same Missionary, Mr. Fish, gives a decided testimony on this case:—

In a law passed whilst I was in Jamaica, (I think it was that which increased the salaries of the Rectors, &c.,) it was recommended to them to spend some time, after service, in instructing the slaves and people of colour. A little regard was paid to this for a few Sundays in Kingston, perhaps in a few other parishes, and then it was no more heard of.

Equally incapable of bearing investigation is Mr. Marryat’s method of proving that the colonists, generally speaking, have not been “indifferent to the cause of Christianity.” He has introduced an enumeration of the islands, with a list of the parishes, benefices, stipends, &c., in each, for the express purposes of rebutting this charge; but all that he does prove is, that the religious concerns of the limited white population

of the islands may be sufficiently provided for. He does not, however, tell us plainly, that this provision is for that privileged class alone, and that the slaves have no participation in the benefit. How, then, is the charge disproved? It was not urged, that the churches were not sufficient to accommodate the whites; that Clergy were not appointed for them; but that the instruction of the slaves was not only not provided for, but in some instances resisted; and that, therefore, whatever exceptions there may be, there are, and must have been, colonists, in various islands, either averse or indifferent to the interests of Christianity. In addition to our own evidence on the subject, Mr. Marryat himself may be brought in, also, as a witness to this fact. Whilst truth proceeds with the steady march of self-assurance, error is often happily detected by her halting, vacillating step. Mr. Marryat himself vindicates the charge he undertakes to refute.

In the list of islands, and churches, and Clergy, inserted in his pamphlet, he, for instance, mentions St. Croix, where almost the whole of the slaves are “actually initiated by baptism, or recorded as belonging to some church or religious establishment; to each of which two or more schools are also attached, for the education and religious instruction of the children of those persons.” This is a cheering picture; but, unluckily for Mr. Marryat’s argument, St. Croix is not an old British colony. Its planters are not British; it has but one English church; and the baptism and instruction of the slaves there is the work of the Danish, Dutch, and Catholic colonists, and not of British Protestants. He introduces the island of St. Thomas, also, where “there exist very few, if any, of the slaves belonging to the Government, who have not been baptized; and from the general disposition of the coloured people to be instructed in the precepts of religion, many of them attach themselves to the different establishments of Lutherans, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Moravians;” and he might have added the Methodists also. But there are two unfortunate circumstances connected with this statement,—the island is Danish, and “there is in it no church, or Curate of the

Church of England." What, then, do these statements prove, but that in islands not British, or but lately become so, and where British colonists have had no influence in their internal regulations, a laudable attention is paid to the religious instruction of slaves, by Catholics, Lutherans, the Dutch Reformed, and even Jews; but in the British colonies themselves, to the shame of our Protestantism, they are in so many cases utterly neglected? This is admitted by Mr. Marryat himself; for as he has enumerated the particulars of the baptism and education of slaves in the islands just named, had the negroes in our old and principal colonies been regarded with equal care, his argument would not have permitted his silence. But he is silent, as to any such attention being paid to the slaves in Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, Trinidad, Nevis, St. Christopher's, Antigua, Grenada, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and, above all, Jamaica, where there are more slaves in bondage than in all the other colonies united. This silence is the more expressive, because the extracts he has introduced mention the English Clergyman, in Demerara, (an honourable exception,) performing divine service for the coloured people every Sunday in the afternoon; and state, that, in Tobago, several negro children are brought every Sunday afternoon to be baptized, probably under the influence of the Rev. Charles Newton, who appears to be a diligent and excellent Clergyman. Here, however, as in other cases, the exceptions prove the rule. In the largest and most populous of the islands, many of the colonists wholly neglect the spiritual concerns of their negroes. The Governor of Dominica, in the Reports quoted by Mr. Marryat, says expressly, that "more religion exists among the French than the English negroes," owing to "the very great neglect of the established Church. There has been no Protestant Church in the island for very many years; and previously to my taking charge of the Government, there had been no Clergyman resident for a considerable time."—*Thoughts on Abolition*, p. 147

But the neglected condition of these our "pagan bondsmen in the West Indies," (for such they must in truth be called, notwithstanding an uninformed and intemperate writer of an

octavo volume in Scotland, has spurned at the epithet,) stands too prominently on direct and unimpeachable testimony to be covered by the artifice resorted to by Mr. Marryat. He may adduce his lists of Clergy and benefices ; but the truth is, that the Clergy in the colonies do not generally consider the negroes as any part of their charge. Displeasing as this statement may be to Mr. Marryat, it would be a crime committed against humanity, and religion, and patriotism, to hide the fact, that, with a very few exceptions, the negroes are neither catechised, baptised, married, or taught in any way, by the Clergy ; and that all the attention of this kind which they have received, they owe to the calumniated Missionaries of different denominations. On this subject we again bring forward the testimony of the Methodist Missionaries ; and let it be remembered that it is testimony corroborated, in its substance, by the public acts of Colonial Legislatures, by the silence of Mr. Marryat, and the admissions of other writers on the same side of the question.* It is, however, necessary to be stated, that the subjoined extracts from the letters of Missionaries on this subject, are not introduced to excite any improper feeling towards the Clergy of the colonies, or those who have the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of them at home. They are stated as necessary parts of the defence of the Mission, inasmuch as they prove the entire moral destitution of the slave ; that the Missionaries have not obtruded themselves upon any field of action which was even supposed to belong to another ; and that they have extended their beneficent care to those who could most truly adopt the language of holy writ, " No man careth for my soul." If they answer another purpose ; if they stimulate the Establishment of the country to new efforts to effect the moral improvement of the enslaved African, the writer will receive additional satisfaction ; being fully persuaded that no efforts, however comprehensive, can, for a long time, be commensurate to wants which have been accumulating for so long a period. The Archbishop of Canterbury appears to

* "That the slaves in the West India colonies are vastly deficient in moral instruction and true religion, no one will deny."—*The Edinburgh Review, and the West Indies.*

have thought that Lord Holland, in his speech on the Registry Bill, in the House of Lords, in the last session of Parliament, made an unfounded charge upon the Church of England, for not having been sufficiently attentive to the instruction of the black population of the West Indies ; and his Lordship explained. The fact, however, remained unaltered ; the black was still neglected. If the whole case had been before his Grace, he would scarcely have thought that sufficient zeal had been exerted in this cause. Men in office do not so often neglect or do amiss from design, as from the want of information ; and if his Grace ever condescend to read these pages, and to make such inquiries as many disinterested and unprejudiced men will be happy to answer, he will find himself greatly fortified in his excellent purpose to give the subject “all proper attention :” And who is there, of any sect, who would not rejoice to see adequate means adopted by the Church to raise the moral condition of the colonial slave ; and a body of holy, zealous, and self-denying Clergymen, sharing the glory, and we must also add, the shame, of attempting their salvation ? The following statements, made by the Missionaries, were in answer to the question which they follow. They resided in different islands, and laboured in the West Indies at different periods, which will account for a few variations in their answers ; but they all agree in the great and general neglect of the slaves, in the particulars mentioned in the question.

What attention was paid to the slaves by the Clergy of the parishes you are acquainted with, in the following particulars ?—Did they baptize the imported negroes, and the children born in the islands ? Did they catechise them ? Did they enforce their attendance at church ? If the slaves cannot be married in the authorized form, did they introduce generally the rite of marriage in any way ?

MR. WARRENER.

I NEVER heard that the Clergy baptized any of the new negroes, nor any of the children, except some who were instructed by Mr. Baxter in Antigua, and taken to the Clergymen, who charged two dollars each. I never heard of any instance beside this, nor of the Clergy or masters enforcing the attendance of the negroes at church. I

believe that marriage among the slaves, in any mode, by the Clergy, was never known in the West Indies.

MR. BROWNELL.

THE Clergy never considered the negroes as any part of their charge ; nor did they baptize either the newly-imported slaves, or those born in the colony, except a planter desired to have a favourite negro baptized, and then the rite was administered. The price or fee was from one to two dollars ; that is, from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 9*s.* sterling. Churches were never built for the negroes, neither were they catechised ; nor was the rite of marriage introduced in any way. A male and female negro agreed to live together as man and wife ; they cohabited until one was tired, and then parted, and formed other connexions. Sometimes a man had several wives at the same time, and the woman had many husbands successively, so that almost every child had a different father. To prevent general confusion, the child followed the mother, fell to the lot of her owner, and was a slave

MR. WILLIS.

I HAVE never known an instance of a Clergyman using any particular efforts to instruct the slaves, more than by their regular preaching, once or twice on the Sabbath-day. Few of the slaves are baptised, except by the Missionaries. I have known no instance of the Clergy catechising the slaves. Very few of the slaves attend the public service of the Church, nor is it a duty enforced upon them by the Clergy, and by few of their owners. There is no attention, that ever I could learn, paid by the Clergy to their marriage in any form whatever.

MR. PATTISON.

As far as I have observed and understood,—and I am acquainted with all the islands from Barbadoes to Tortola,—none of the parochial Clergymen considered the negroes any part of their charge ; and I believe, previous to the introduction of the Gospel by Missionaries, whatever might be done on particular application to them by owners of slaves, they neither baptised imported slaves, nor those born on the islands. The usual way of giving names to those imported was this : On the day of sale, the purchaser affixed a ticket with a name round the neck of his newly-purchased slave ; and by that name he was known in the plantation book. Those born in the islands had their names given them at their birth by their masters, and recorded accordingly. With respect to catechising and enforcing their attendance at church, I know of no instance, except in the case of the Rev. Mr. Dent, of the parish of St. George, in the island of Grenada. This good man baptised, catechised, and instructed the negroes to attend the church ;

and for this labour of love and discharge of duty, he was persecuted and stigmatized as a Methodist. I have never known, except in the case of Mr. D., an attempt to unite the slaves in any form so as to prevent polygamy, by the parochial Clergy.

MR. GILGRASS.

A FEW Creole slaves, favourites, were baptized; and for this the Clergyman received 18s. currency, 9s. sterling, and sometimes much more. Through the lapse of ten years I never heard of any Clergymen catechising a slave. They did not enforce their attendance at church; on the contrary, I have heard repeatedly, that the Clergy would not preach to blacks and browns only; an instance I knew, where the Clergyman told Mr. Woolley and myself, that as there were no whites in the church, but only a few negroes, he had brought his sermon away in his pocket. The marriage of slaves was not introduced by the Clergy.

MR. DIXON.

THE Clergy did baptize when applied to, but charged 18s. currency for every child and adult; and I never knew an instance of the master paying for the baptism. I never heard of any Clergyman catechising the negroes, except the Rev. Mr. Nash, of Carricou; and he gave it up because of the violent opposition he met with. I know of no instance of the Clergy enforcing their attendance at the church, except a Church Missionary in Antigua. I believe slaves can be married in the legal form; and it has been done in Antigua, in a few instances, when the masters have desired it; but except these, and one in Grenada, I never heard of slaves being married in any form by the Clergy.

MR. FISH.

THE Clergyman does not look upon negroes as any part of his charge. The Clergy baptize when proprietors desire it; but religious instruction, or enforcing attendance at church, is out of the question. Marriage among the negroes is even ridiculed among the whites in general. I am not aware of any law in Jamaica which forbids the marriage of slaves in the legal form.

MR. CAMPBELL.

I NEVER heard of any slaves, who were newly imported, having been baptized. I do not know of any of the negro children born in the island having been baptized; yet this might be the case in other parts. As it respects the catechising of negro slaves by the Clergy, I do not know where this was done by any of them. I do not know any place where they enforced their attendance at the parish church.

MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR.

If the imported negroes, or their masters, desired their baptism, or if the parents or masters of the negro children born in the islands desired it for them, it was, I believe, administered ; or otherwise they were not baptized ; and I do not suppose that one in a hundred had been by the regular Clergy admitted to baptism. Except in solitary instances, they were not catechised. Attendance of the slaves at church was neither enforced, desired, nor given. The rite of marriage was not, to the best of my knowledge, introduced in any way by the parochial Clergy among the slaves.

MR. BRADNACK.

MR. NANKERVILLE, a Church Missionary sent out by Bishop Porteus, was the only one I knew, who paid any attention to the negroes.

It is not alleged that the Clergy are wholly to bear the blame of this neglect. Their number is insufficient for the whole work ; and the neglect could not have existed, had not the public sentiment of the whites been, in a great degree, either opposed to the exercise of their functions among the negroes, or at least indifferent to it. How far this will support Mr. Marryat in proving the regard of the colonists to the interests of Christianity in the islands, may be left to the judgment of the public ; and whatever effect he might hope to produce by an enumeration of parishes and churches, will be dissipated by the facts, which could, if necessary, be confirmed by numerous testimonies, that some parishes have no churches at all, and that in all they are utterly inadequate to accommodate the population. They were not built, indeed, with any reference to the accommodation of the slave and coloured population ; and if, in some of the principal towns, they are of considerable dimensions, in the country they are often small and mean in the extreme. In Jamaica, for instance, there are about nineteen or twenty churches, many of them of this diminutive description, in a population approaching to half a million of souls. In Dominica there is no church at all ; nor even in St. Vincent's, where the Assembly has lately been moved to prepare a law restricting the labours of Missionaries of every kind, and where is a population of perhaps thirty

thousand slaves. Service is performed in a room, though there are two parishes. In Nevis there are five churches, and three Ministers ; consequently, but three of them can be open at the same time. The same paucity of churches is seen on the other islands. Tortola has but recently received a church ; and in " all the group of little keys or islands," says a Missionary, " from Anagedo to Jost Van Dykes, there was not one church, when I was there, or any place of worship except the Methodist chapels." Many places, similarly circumstanced, and containing a considerable population, are to be found in the West Indies. But, inadequate as the accommodation of churches is, it is even more than is available by the slaves. Their attendance is neither desired nor enforced. At the most they must not presume further than the aisle, (if in every case into that,) or some obscure corner ; and even there seats are not always provided for them. There seems no reason to doubt the assertion of a Missionary, who says, " I do not believe that one hundredth part of the slave population ever attended church."

IV.—SUNDAY AMONG SLAVES.

THAT view of the state of society among the enslaved population of the West India colonies, which establishes the importance and necessity of Missionary exertions, the only means at present directed to their improvement, cannot so well be completed, as by adverting to those peculiar circumstances which deprive them of the moral benefit and the rest of a Sabbath.

By all enlightened politicians, the utility of sabbatical institutions has been acknowledged, even when they have regarded them under no higher a sanction than the civil benefits they induce. " That interval of relaxation which Sunday affords to the laborious part of mankind contributes greatly to the comfort and satisfaction of their lives, both as it refreshes them for the time, and as it relieves their six days' labour, by the

prospect of a day of rest always approaching.” “Whoever considers how much sabbatical institutions conduce to the happiness and civilization of the labouring classes of mankind, and reflects how great a majority of the human species these classes compose, will acknowledge the utility of this distinction, and will consequently perceive it to be every man’s duty to uphold the observance of Sunday.”—*Paley*. That benefit has not yet been conceded to the slaves of the West Indies. Their bodies have not yet received the immunity of resting one day in seven, nor their minds those advantages from the public worship of Almighty God on that day, for the sake of which it was instituted. The refreshing and civilizing effect of the former has not, therefore, been felt by them, nor the moralizing influence of the latter. It is very true, to use the words of the same writer, that “joining in prayer and praise to their common Creator and Governor has a sensible tendency to unite mankind together, and to cherish and enlarge the generous affections, and that the frequent returns of such sentiments as the presence of a devout congregation naturally suggests, will gradually melt down the ruggedness of many unkind passions, and may generate in time, permanent and productive benevolence.” If these views be correct, and the experience of mankind is in their favour, nothing can be so desirable for the West Indies, because nothing is more needed than the moral effect which results from it, as a day of rest, and a day of collective and united worship.

That such an institution does not exist in the colonies, is a matter of sufficient notoriety. The whites may attend church; but it is not to worship a Lord who is recognised to be the common Lord of bond and free. The distinction of caste is carried even into religion; and whilst that service is performed which contains prayers for “all conditions of men,” those Scriptures read which hold out the benefits of a “common salvation,” without distinction, to every kindred, tongue, and people; and that law pronounced which enjoins, that the servant, as well as the master, shall, on the Sabbath-day, be exonerated from labour, and to which law the worshippers pray their hearts may be “inclined;” the slave is at his toil,

under the lash of his driver ; he is working his ground for maintenance, or employed in carrying its fruits to market ; where, after he has disposed of them, he spends the remainder of the day, if he be not too far from home, in dancing, drinking, and every kind of riot, in company with his fellow-savages.

This, then, is the picture of Sunday in the British West India colonies. A few whites are seen in churches, where still fewer negroes, though forming the chief part of the population, are ever seen. The regular market throughout the West Indies is on the Sunday ; and the chief towns exhibit all the noise and bustle of petty commerce. To them the slaves come from the different plantations, on those Sundays they are not raising the commodities they have to dispose of, to furnish themselves with such necessaries or conveniences as their owners do not supply ; and, the sale or barter being ended, the day is closed in noisy riot and wild debauchery. Britain and Protestantism may well blush at this, when it is known, that, in the colonies of Catholic states, the Saturday, and not the Sunday, is given to the slaves to work their grounds, and to supply their wants ; that Sunday is there a day of rest, and of worship also ; and that, in addition to this, the numerous saints' days in the Romish calendar, affording many holidays to the slave, in the course of the year, give a further amelioration to his labours, and additional opportunities of acquainting himself with religion.

It is true, that the Report of the Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica has informed the public, that, by the Consolidated Slave Laws, " slaves are to be allowed one day in a fortnight out of crop, exclusive of Sundays, to cultivate their grounds." But it is to be observed, that, were this law duly enforced, crop time continues from four to six months in the year ; so that the boon, so ostentatiously held up as a splendid instance of the considerate benevolence of the Jamaica planters is greatly diminished. The extent of it is, however, stated to reach to what is equal to one day in fourteen allowed to the slave, exclusive of Sunday, throughout the year ; and this, with a calculation as to the superior productiveness of

lands in the torrid zone, is argued to be an allowance fully equal to the comfortable maintenance of a negro family. It is, however, somewhat remarkable, that, in this case, the slave should ever have been allowed, even every Sunday, to work his grounds ; for, as his religious instruction has been so often thought unnecessary, and Sunday, therefore, has had no religious designation, if one day in fourteen, applied to the working of the negro grounds, would have been adequate to his plentiful supply, what consideration has kept the planters from exacting the labour of the slave on the alternate Sunday for their own emolument ? Or, if every Sunday were allowed him, why has not this productiveness of climate been made a reason for casting the slave wholly on his own resources, and freeing the master from all obligation to contribute to his support in any degree ? Whatever may be the case now, there have been times when a humane consideration of the slave would not have prevented this ; and we suppose that the lands were then equally productive as at present.*

The provisions of law in the West Indies are, however, to be considered in a very different light from that in which they are viewed in England.† Except in very glaring instances

* The above was written when the author met with "The Amelioration of Slavery," by Mr. Koster, published in the *Pamphleteer* for November. Several of the observations made in the former part of this work are confirmed by him ; and he also has noticed that part of the *Jamaica Report* alluded to above. He ridicules the statement of that extraordinary fertility in the soil of tropical climates, which, as the Report argues, renders one day's labour in *Jamaica* as productive as twenty-five in Europe. "I know," he observes, "that the Saturday of each week is not sufficient in *Brazil* for the slave to provide for the remaining six days." "I have heard some plantation slaves complain heavily of the Saturday not being sufficient. I have likewise understood, from many owners and managers, that they did not consider it as affording competent time." "I cannot imagine that the soil of *Jamaica* is more productive than that of *Brazil* ; and I should imagine that fish and flesh may be obtained at a lower rate in the latter than in the former. I cannot in any wise believe that the labour of one day is sufficient to supply food for the fourteen."—*Pamphleteer*, No. 16, p. 329.

† "In this island," (Tobago,) "and in every other, there are laws for the protection of slaves, and good ones ; but circumstances in the administration of whatever law render it a dead letter."—**SIR W. YOUNG**, in *Papers relating to the West Indies, &c.*

of violation, who is to enforce them for the benefit of the slave? A white would be exposed to the greatest obloquy for such gratuitous and officious benevolence; and the testimony of a slave is not received. Should, therefore, the boon of one day in fourteen be denied the slave, contrary to law, the master is almost secure of impunity; and the more likely is the law to be evaded, if the statement of the Report of the vast productiveness of the soil of Jamaica be correct; for then he has only to oblige the slaves to work their grounds on the Sunday, and they secure their own maintenance, whilst he may take their Saturday for his own profit. There is great reason to think, that this is often the case, and that the law respecting the one day in a fortnight, like the law respecting the religious instruction of the slaves, was "made for England." For though it was passed in 1784, the testimony of Missionaries is uniform and decided, as to the employment of the slaves on the Sunday, both in Jamaica and the rest of the islands; nor is there any one of them who notices the "one Saturday in a fortnight out of crop," as an existing alleviation in practice generally.*

Mr. Fish, who spent many years in Jamaica, says,—

Sunday is chiefly spent, by the field negroes, in working their own

* The religious slaves would doubtless avail themselves of this law, were it generally carried into effect. If, however, they were exempted from labour, they must either starve, or attend market, which is every where held on Sunday. That, under all these disadvantages, the labours of the Missionaries have produced some good effects in giving some character of sanctity to that day, and producing a sense of obligation as to its observance, will appear from the following extract:—"Throughout the West Indies in general the Sabbath is the common market-day; but in Nevis, many of the white people shut up their shops and stores, and attend on divine worship; while the negroes, who used to spend that sacred day in dancing, drinking, and fighting, now come in crowds to the house of God, to hear his word, and sing his praise."—DR. BROWN'S *History of the Propagation of Christianity, &c.*

A letter from Mr. Warrener, an aged Methodist Missionary, contains the following anecdote:—"When I was in Antigua, one of the managers said to one of our black members, who was a slave, 'Ben, go down to the boat, and catch me some fish: I am going to have company to-day,' (Sunday,) 'and I will pay you for your trouble.' Ben said, 'Massa, if you order me to go, I must go; but me take no ting for what me forced to do on a Sunday.' To the credit of the manager, he did not oblige him to go."

grounds, which is the source from whence they derive their food ; or in bringing what little spare produce they may have to market ; for Sunday is the grand public market-day throughout the West Indies. The mechanics may work for their own profit and support, if any one chooses to employ them. The household negroes have to mind the house affairs, &c. Many who do not fear God find a little time to play ; and the pious, as far as permitted, spend their leisure Sabbath-time in Christian duties.

Mr. Gilgrass, who also speaks of Jamaica, states,—

The Sabbaths are spent generally as follows :—The slaves turn out to pick grass for the horses, mules, oxen, sheep, &c. There is no hay made in the islands ; the grass they pick any where upon the estate, both morning and night, throughout the year. After breakfast, a driver, with an overseer, accompanies the slaves to the negro grounds, given to them in lieu of allowance from the master. Here they spend the blessed Sabbath, toiling hard all day. This is their rest. The second Sabbath, these slaves carry to market their provisions to sell, &c. In Jamaica, some of them travel, with heavy loads upon their heads, five, ten, fifteen, or twenty miles. To accomplish this journey in time to pick grass on the Sabbath night, they travelled all the preceding Saturday night. If they were not in time to pick the grass, no allowance was made, but many stripes were laid upon them. Those that neither work nor go to market will sleep, smoke cigars, and dance to a tomtom. The most pious slaves in the islands have to do the same work on the Sabbath as the others, when the master will not give the Saturday to do it in for that purpose. The slaves come to market in the forenoon, and from thence to the chapel : Frequently the chapel-yard was covered with market-baskets, whilst the slaves were at divine worship. The Sabbath is the chief market-day in all the islands.

Such is Sunday among the slaves of the British colonies in the West Indies. It is not insinuated that sufficient time is not allowed the slaves in general, to provide for their comfortable subsistence. The contrary is proved, by their obtaining money to purchase spirits, and other sensual gratifications ; but that time is generally Sunday, which is consumed partly in attending markets, partly in gross and destructive dissipation, and partly in labour ; too many of the West India colonists probably thinking that

*Rivos deducere nulla
Religio vetuit, segeti prætendere sepem, &c.*

This subject is introduced for the sole purpose of completing the view of the moral state of the colonies. The Missionaries have not, as it has been insinuated, excited complaints among the slaves on this subject. They have, doubtless, been deeply grieved at the profanation of Sunday; and the good effects of their labours have been greatly counteracted by it; but they have taken the slaves according to their circumstances, conformed their religious exercises as far as possible to their convenience, seized upon the broken parts of time assigned them for leisure, and made the best use of them. Any alteration of their condition, as far as Sunday is concerned, which their masters might voluntarily make, they have left to be effected by the slow and quiet operation of principle. A general exception of the Sunday from toil is a civil act, which falls into the province of the Colonial Legislatures and the Imperial Parliament to establish; and the Missionaries have not agitated the question.

V.—LABOURS OF THE MISSIONARIES.

THE religious care of the negroes in the British colonies being almost wholly left to Missionaries, except in such of them as have establishments of the Catholic religion, their labours come, in the next place, to be noticed; and the world ought to be informed to what extent of exertion the benevolent zeal of these disinterested men has carried them, in order to raise into humanity, and bring within the influence of the Christian religion, a degraded and neglected body of their fellow-men.

The Moravians have settlements in St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. Jan, Jamaica, Barbadoes, Antigua, and St. Christopher. The Methodists co-operate with them in their Christian work in the four last-mentioned islands, and extend their labours also to St. Eustatius, St. Vincent, Dominica, Nevis, Tortola, and the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, St. Bartholomew, Grenada, and Bermuda; which islands they exclusively occupy,

there being no Missionaries of any other denomination in them except a Church Missionary at Nevis. At Trinidad and Demerara the London Missionary Society has also recently appointed Missionaries. In Jamaica, in addition to the Moravians and Methodists, the Baptists have also a considerable Mission; and, in Antigua, there is a Church Missionary. From this statement it will appear, that the largest share of the labour of instructing the negroes of the British colonies has fallen to the Methodists, who, since 1786, when their Mission in Antigua was reinforced and began to extend itself to other islands, have employed, in succession, not fewer than one hundred and thirty Missionaries in the West Indies, several of whom spent from ten to twenty years in those stations. The number now regularly employed is thirty-nine.

That the Missionaries have had no ordinary difficulties to contend with in their Mission, subsequent statements will show; that theirs is not a post of honour, whatever of desert it may have, the present temper of many of the colonists towards them, and the abuse so plentifully poured upon their motives and conduct, both at home and abroad, will be sufficient evidence; and that it is not an office of repose and exemption from hard and constant exertion, will be made evident from the following plan of their labour, which, with very little variation and abatement, is the employment of each individual engaged in the work.

The Missionaries were, in the first instance, introduced into most of the islands by Dr. Coke, whose memory will remain cherished by negro gratitude as that of one of the best friends of their race, when the sneers in Mr. Marryat's pamphlet shall be either forgotten, or remembered among the prejudices which unavailingly oppose themselves to the force of truth, and the moral advancement of the human race. A court-house, dancing-room, or other building, procured by some who regarded the interests of religion, (and a few such were found in every island,) was used as the first place of worship in the principal towns. Whites and blacks were indiscriminately invited, though the express designation of the Mission was to the negro, so much so, that the Missionaries obtained a title in contradis-

tination to other Ministers, of which they had no cause to be ashamed,—“the Negro Parsons.” Leave was then requested, and in many instances obtained, to visit the negroes on estates in the country. The itinerant labours of the Missionary then commenced. The negroes were catechised; and, when religious impressions were made upon their hearts, they were formed into religious societies, the condition of which, both as to admission and continuance, was, that they should forsake their vices, and live “righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world.” These societies were again subdivided into classes, over which a white presides, if one can be found, or an experienced mulatto or negro, whose religious change and steady conduct had had full proof; and to these classes he was appointed, in order to administer religious instruction weekly, speaking to the members one by one. When no suitable person could be found for this office, a case which frequently occurred, this work devolved upon the Missionary, in addition to his public services, and greatly enhanced his labour, which comprehended, also, baptism, marriage, visiting the sick negroes at their huts, and the burial of the dead. The plan of Missionary labour arising out of these circumstances, is, therefore, nearly as follows:—At six or seven o’clock on the Sunday morning, the Missionary gives instruction to the classes at one of the chapels; at ten he reads an abridgment of the Prayers of the Church of England, and preaches; from twelve to two he meets other classes, or baptizes, hears disputes, settles differences, and, once a month, administers the sacrament of the Lord’s supper after the morning service; at three or four in the afternoon he preaches again. In some of the large towns in the islands, there has occasionally been a sermon at six o’clock on the evening of Sunday; but the darkness affording an opportunity for some of the civilized inhabitants to disturb the service, that practice has not become common. At break of day, often every morning through the week, a portion of Scripture is expounded, the service concluding in time for the slaves to “turn out” to work; after that the children are catechised. On the week-day evenings the Missionary preaches to the negroes on the plantations, so that

"every night in the week," says Mr Pattison, "we had to preach, catechise adults, or meet classes."

Such exertions would be considered severe in a temperate climate ; but they are strictly so in the West Indies, where the heat disposes to lassitude, and more than usual exercise is frequently the forerunner of fatal diseases, whose progress is often too rapid to be arrested by medicine. They have been greatly destructive to the Wesleyan Missionaries : Since the commencement of the Mission, twenty-six of them have fallen victims to the climate and to excessive labours ; though they have, in most cases, been removed when symptoms of debility have first appeared.

To prompt to a work of this kind, and, more especially, to support a person in it for a number of years, it is evident that strong motives must be in operation. Of what kind those motives are, will, of course, be differently interpreted by the friends and by the enemies of Missions. That honour cannot be the actuating motive, will be readily conceded ; and it will be sufficient for the purpose of this section to show that it is not interest.

The common opinion among many of the white people in the West Indies is, that the Missionaries are very handsomely remunerated for their trouble. This is not surprising : There are persons who can form no notion of a principle which, unmixed with earthly interest, can inspire a friendly fellow-feeling towards a black, and lead to the toils and dangers of a Missionary life in a destructive climate. It is natural enough, therefore, for them to assign interest as the motive, because it is that alone which causes their own presence in a part of the world where disease breathes in every gale, and a thousand formidable accidents render health and life insecure beyond their natural frailty. Under this persuasion, many idle tales have been invented of money being extorted by the Missionaries from their followers at pleasure. Unfortunately for so summary a method of lowering the character of Christian zeal, the facts are, that the pecuniary remuneration of the Missionaries is fixed by the Missionary Committee at home ; that the sum allowed them is merely equal to their comfortable subsistence in

plain habits of life ; that the sums raised for their support in the colonies,—from the public collections made in the congregations, the mites of gratitude which the negroes will offer towards the general expense, and the larger contributions of such of the whites as are friendly to the cause of religion,—all come under the cognisance of white stewards of respectability, the amount of which, with the disbursements, is regularly transmitted to the Committee in very minute detail ; and that the other expenses of the Missions, including passage-money and the outfit of Missionaries, and such of the current expenses as cannot be met in the islands, are all given to the public (whose liberality supplies the funds) in the Annual Reports of the Managing Committee in London. This, then, is the remuneration of the Wesleyan Missionaries : A mere supply of food, clothing, and medicine, from the Mission fund at home, or from those for whose benefit they labour, and from those planters who appreciate the value of their exertions ; and abuse, insult, persecution, and occasionally imprisonment, from others, whose slaves they are rendering better servants, and whose interests and personal security they are, by the effect of their instructions upon the mind and temper of the negro, continually promoting.

Their success may in part be estimated from the following statement of the number which, after previous instruction and a period of probation, in order to make proof of the permanence of their religious impressions and the reality of their moral reformation, they consider as regular members of their religious societies :—

	Whites.	Blacks & coloured.	Total.
Antigua	21	3156	3177
St. Christopher's	44	2955	2999
Nevis	32	1389	1421
St. Bartholomew's	13	528	541
Tortola and the Virgin Isles	75	1717	1792
Dominica	—	710	710
St. Vincent	14	2926	2940
Barbadoes	10	44	54
Grenada	2	171	173
Trinidad	5	325	330
Demerara	6	358	364

	Whites.	Blacks & coloured.	Tots.
Jamaica	27	3180	3207
New-Providence and Bahamas	537	597	1134
Bermuda	39	57	96

Total		18,938	_____

This statement, however, presents but a partial view of the religious influence of the Missionaries. Beside those numbered in society, there are likewise the adult catechumens and the children of negroes. In the plantations, also, the negro hearers are many times more than the members in society; and it is not an exaggerated calculation, that considerably more than a hundred thousand blacks and people of colour enjoy the benefits of Christian instruction, in different degrees, in the West Indies from the Methodist Missionaries and other active and pious persons who fill the offices of Local Preachers, Exhorters, and Leaders of classes in the Wesleyan societies. Of the number above mentioned as members of society, (but a few short of nineteen thousand,) it may be affirmed, that they have been brought from pagan darkness to the "knowledge of a Deity and the Christian faith;" that polygamy has been banished from among them; that the relations of husband, wife, and parent, have been established; that they have been brought under the comforting and controlling influence of Christianity; and that their character has been so heightened by the obvious effects of religion upon them, that, in estates where the negroes have been instructed by Missionaries, the religious negroes have been almost uniformly selected to fill offices of trust.* But the moral effects of the labours of

* "Many of our negroes have, by their merit, obtained places of trust upon the estates, as drivers, boilers, watchmen, &c.; and some, especially in the island of Tortola, have supplied the place of white overseers."—MR. BROWNELL.

"Slaves who fill offices of trust on the estates are, almost constantly, selected from among such as are under the care of the Missionaries."—MR. J. TAYLOR.

To this it may be satisfactory to add the testimony of a writer who is not a Methodist; and who, though a friend to Missions, is not thought to have done more than justice to the labours of the Wesleyan Missions in the West

the Missionaries will be subsequently more fully adduced, in refutation of the charges brought against them by their opponents.

India colonies. The author of the "History of the Propagation of Christianity" (Dr. Brown) says of the members of the Methodist societies in the West Indies, that "all of them, as far as is known, fulfil with propriety the relative duties of life, even their own masters being judges; or if any occasionally transgress the rules of morality, they are excluded from the society, at least after neglecting due reproof. They have all abandoned the practice of polygamy, the besetting sin of the negroes; and the fatal influence of *obia*, or witchcraft, which is often productive of most terrible mischief among the slaves, is destroyed wherever Christianity prevails. As a proof of the general good conduct of the converts, it is not unworthy of notice, that, when an office which requires trust and confidence becomes vacant, such as that of a watchman, it is a usual practice with the planters and managers to inquire for a religious negro to fulfil it."

Dr. Brown has fallen into a great mistake when he asserts that "few of the negroes in the Methodist societies, comparatively, have been baptized or admitted to the Lord's supper." Were this the case, it would only prove that the Missionaries are extremely scrupulous as to the characters admitted to such ordinances, when, after the radical moral changes he allows to have been effected, those ordinances are not generally administered. "But none," says Mr. Pattison, one of the most experienced Missionaries, "are in society who have not been baptized." Those on trial are not baptized, but they are not, of course, members of society; and, with respect to the sacrament, the same Missionary observes, "I think two-thirds, at least, of our members, in the principal places, regularly attend the Lord's supper."

The practice of *obia* having been mentioned, the following account of this superstition may be acceptable to many readers:—

"The term 'obia men or women,'" says Mr. Bryan Edwards, "is now become, in Jamaica, the general term to denote those Africans who, in that island, practise witchcraft or sorcery.

"The oldest and most crafty are those who usually attract the greatest devotion and confidence; those whose hoary heads and a somewhat peculiarly harsh and forbidding aspect, together with some skill in plants of a medicinal and poisonous species, have qualified them for successful imposition upon the weak and credulous. The negroes in general, whether Africans or Creoles, revere, consult, and fear them. To these oracles they resort, and with the most implicit faith, upon all occasions, whether for the cure of disorders, the obtaining revenge for injuries or insults, the conciliating of favour, the discovering and punishment of the thief or the adulterer, and the prediction of future events. The trade which these impostors carry on is extremely lucrative; they manufacture and sell their *obies*, adapted to different cases, and at different prices. A veil of mystery is studiously thrown over their incantations, to which the midnight hours are allotted; and every precaution is taken to conceal them from the knowledge of the white people. The

VI.—TREATMENT OF THE METHODIST MISSIONARIES.

IT has been seen how unfortunate Mr. Marryat is in his attempt to establish the sufficiency of the means of religious

deluded negroes thoroughly believe in their supernatural power, and the stoutest among them tremble at the very sight of the ragged bundle, the bottle, or the egg-shells which are stuck in the thatch, or hung over the door of a hut, or upon the branch of a plantain-tree, to deter marauders.

“ It is very difficult for the white proprietor to distinguish the obia professor from any other negro upon his plantation ; and so infatuated are the blacks in general, that but few instances occur of their having assumed courage enough to impeach these miscreants. With minds so firmly prepossessed, they no sooner find the obia set for them near the door of their house, or in the path which leads to it, than they give themselves up for lost. When a negro is robbed of a fowl, or a hog, he applies directly to the obia man of the neighbourhood, who may counteract the magical operations of the other ; but if no one can be found of higher rank and ability, or if, after gaining such an ally, he should still fancy himself affected, he presently falls into a decline, under the incessant horror of impending calamities. The slightest painful sensation in the head, bowels, or any other part, any casual loss, or hurt, confirms his apprehensions ; and he believes himself the devoted victim of an invisible and irresistible agency. Sleep, appetite, and cheerfulness forsake him ; his strength decays, his disturbed imagination is haunted without respite, his features wear the settled gloom of despondency ; dirt, or any other unwholesome substance, becomes his only food ; he contracts a morbid habit of body, and gradually sinks into the grave. A negro who is taken ill inquires of the obia man the cause of his sickness, whether it will prove mortal or not, and within what time he shall die or recover. The oracle generally ascribes the distemper to the malice of some particular person by name, and advises to set obi for that person ; but if no hopes are given of recovery, immediate despair takes place, which no medicine can remove ; and death is a certain consequence.”

To have conquered this superstition in the minds of so many thousand slaves is no mean proof of the faithful labours of Missionaries, and of their unequivocal success in bringing the minds of the slaves under the influence of Christian principles. Two female slaves, members of the Methodist society, were on one occasion brought up before the manager of the estate, charged by an old free negro with having robbed him of two dogs, the name of a silver coin. On explanation, it appeared that the prosecutor was an obia man ; and before the female slaves were brought under religious instruction he had threatened them with obi, unless they would give him a dog each. Under the influence of their pagan terrors they gave him the money ; but, after their conversion, meeting accidentally with the old wizard, they took from him each a dog, the sum he had obtained from them, defying his arts. The manager, of course, approved of their spirit, and dismissed the charge.

instruction in the colonies, by introducing a list of churches and Clergy in the different islands. His quotations on this subject, from the "Papers relating to the West Indies," prove the contrary of his proposition, and, better than any other evidence, negative the fallacious conclusion he endeavours to impress upon the public. The illustration of the head affixed to this section will show on what foundation his very unguarded assertion rests, that "no spirit of intolerance has been shown even to sectarian Preachers in the colonies; and that, on the contrary, they are only interfered with, when, like Mr. Talboys, they preach doctrines which endanger the security of the white inhabitants, by exciting the negroes to disaffection and revolt." Mr. Marryat is either very partially acquainted with the subject on which he is so positive, or possesses a large share of temerity.

It is readily granted, that, in some of the colonies, not only have no persecuting laws ever been enacted against the Wesleyan Missionaries, but that they have been greatly encouraged, not only by many planters, but by the local Governments. Antigua, Nevis, St. Christopher's, and some others, are among these exceptions; but what do they prove, except that the persecutions directed against the same Missionaries (the same, not merely in sect and doctrine, but in some instances the same identically) in other islands were the result of prejudice and religious intolerance alone, and can find no justification in the conduct of the sufferers, whose "doctrine and manner of life" could surely be as well estimated in Antigua, Nevis, and St. Christopher's, as in Jamaica, St. Vincent, Barbadoes, Dominica, and Tortola? But when Mr. Marryat put a universal negative upon the intolerance of the colonists, had he ever heard of the law passed in 1793 in St. Vincent, for prohibiting the Missionaries, without a single proof of any misconduct on their part, or any ill effects arising from their labours, from preaching to the negroes, under the severest penalties; for the first transgression, a fine of £18; for the second, "such corporal punishment as the Court should think proper," to be followed with banishment: and if the person should return from banishment, with death?

This law, under which one of the Wesleyan Missionaries, Mr. Lumb, was imprisoned, continued in force until it was nullified, not in St. Vincent, but in England. Equally notorious, and equally without pretence, though the author of the “Thoughts on Abolition” has not adverted to it, was the law passed in Bermuda, in 1801, to prevent the preaching of Missionaries, “from any religious society whatever;” and under which Mr. Stephenson, an aged Missionary, of eminent piety and prudence, suffered a six months’ imprisonment in a loathsome gaol; from which he was only liberated to add to the weight of years, a constitution broken by his sufferings. Was Mr. Marryat ignorant, also, of all the intolerant laws and proceedings, in Jamaica, when he declared that Missionaries “are only interfered with when they preach doctrines which endanger the security of the white inhabitants?” Did he not know that all those laws against Missionaries, which have made that island so notorious, and which rendered persons attempting the instruction of the negroes liable to public floggings, hard labour in the workhouse, heavy fines, and imprisonment in the common gaol, &c.,—which last punishment was actually inflicted upon Mr. Campbell, Mr. Gilgrass, and Mr. Williams,—were enacted, without a single instance being adduced, or proof given, of the dangerousness of the doctrines taught by them; and which, therefore, openly resolved themselves into an unpalliated intolerance? Did he not know, that, in that island, the intolerance of the Legislature became so flagrant, that His Majesty issued a general order, in 1809, to the Governors of the West Indies, commanding them not to give their assent to any law, relative to religion, till they had first transmitted a draught of the bill to England, and had received His Majesty’s approbation of it; and that the Assembly of Jamaica so violently resented this interference, that the Duke of Manchester, the Governor, was obliged to dissolve them? And is he ignorant, that, in Kingston, the Corporation, availing itself of a clause in its charter, artfully introduced for that purpose, and the intent of which was not perceived by the Government at home, when this act of incorporation was sanctioned, have, almost to this day, continued its intolerant

career, in defiance of the well-known sentiments of His Majesty, and successive Administrations, and the wishes of many respectable persons on that island ? These things, and many others of a similar kind, Mr. Marryat ought to have known, before he pronounced his panegyric on the tolerant spirit of men, of whose views he has become at once the organ and the advocate. But the measure of the opposition and sufferings of the Wesleyan Missionaries is not to be taken alone from the laws enacted by colonial Legislatures. Where no persecuting laws have existed, they have often been attacked by mobs, chiefly of whites, or those under their immediate control ; and in many cases without being able to obtain redress from the colonial magistracy. In Barbadoes, the only redress which could be obtained, in a case of riot, and an attempt to pull down the chapel, was an observation from a Magistrate, that the offence was committed against Almighty God, and therefore he could take no cognisance of it. The most violent and, in some instances, very singular means have been resorted to, to obstruct their labours. Of the latter kind was the stratagem, devised in Barbadoes, to operate on the superstition of the lower classes, who were informed, that, in case they went to the Methodist chapel, they should not be buried in the churchyard. Among the former, we regret to rank the punishment of slaves for the crime of listening to the only men who would instruct them in the way to heaven.* There are, indeed, few of the Missionaries who have

* So heavy a charge ought neither to be lightly made, nor indiscriminately applied. The slaves have not been punished for this offence in every island ; and in all we hope the instances have been comparatively few ; but that they have been so punished in some places, will appear from the following testimony of several Missionaries :—“ I know of instances,” says Mr. Pattison, “ where slaves have been punished solely for attending our ministry ; and refer to Tortola, in the year 1801.”

“ We have only the evidence of slaves upon this subject, but of such slaves whose veracity I can depend upon ; and many instances have occurred.”—**MR. FISH.**

“ Slaves have been punished solely and entirely for attending our ministry. I knew one so flogged, on the evening of the day he was baptized, that he was three weeks before he could come again to chapel.”—**MR. GILGRASS.**

“ Negro evidence would not be received in the island ; but I have no doubt

escaped insult ; many have been repeatedly menaced with corporal punishment ; and several have sustained great personal injury, from the brutal assaults committed upon them by men whom they could only offend by the faithfulness with which they executed their mission, and whom they either forgave, when the Magistrates would protect them, or whose fury they were obliged to submit to, for want of redress. In support of all this, a great mass of evidence might be collected, because almost every Missionary has much to complain of ; but a few instances will be sufficient to show how unfounded is Mr. Marryat's unrestricted assertion, that the colonists have not shown "any spirit of intolerance" towards even the "sectarian Preachers." They will also show, how little regard even some men of respectability, Magistrates, and Members of the Legislature, have had for the liberties of others ; and explain the reason why persecuting laws have been sometimes passed in colonial Assemblies.

MR. BROWNELL.

IN Tortola, Spanish-Town, and all the group of little keys or islands from Anagedo to Jost Van Dykes, there was not one church, nor any place of worship of any kind, except the Methodist chapel ;

that some have been punished for their attendance on our ministry."—**MR. CAMPBELL.**

A similar testimony is given by others ; and we ask whether flogging has not been very recently resorted to in the island of St. Vincent, to cure the negroes of their religious propensities ? We know it has, though we do not now enter into particulars ; and this violence we strongly suspect to have been one of the effects produced by the circulation of Mr. Marryat's pamphlet in the West Indies. Certain it is, that it has excited opposition in islands where none before was manifested, and heightened it where it before existed. We shall mention an outrage with which it is very justly chargeable in a subsequent note. Its effects in the island of Nevis appear, however, likely to counteract themselves. Upon its circulation there, many slaves were forbidden to hear the Missionaries ; but the curiosity of several planters being excited to ascertain how "destructive" the doctrines taught by these "dark and dangerous fanatics" might be ; many of them went to hear for themselves, and have not only ceased from uttering those censures which, on the authority of Mr. Marryat, and other writers on the same side, they had begun to fulminate, but have expressed their approbation of the doctrines delivered. It is to be regretted that many sensible and well-disposed men in other islands have not adopted the same means of obtaining information.

nor did any Clergyman perform divine service the greater part of the time I was there. I mentioned this circumstance in a letter to the Committee for our Missions. The letter was published in the Magazine for August, 1815. A Devonshire Clergyman, whose son went down in the same packet with me to Tortola, saw the printed letter, and sent an extract of it to his son. The extract was this : "I find religion has made a great alteration for the better among the blacks ; but among the whites, fornication, adultery, and neglect of all religion, are reigning sins." In consequence of this, a Magistrate, the Clergyman's son, and two more, fell upon me in the open street, beat me unmercifully, and laid open my head with the butt end of a whip. They would certainly have killed me that day ; but Providence, by a little circumstance, preserved me ; and I carried my life in my hand for many weeks after. I brought this cause regularly before the Court of Grand Sessions ; but though it was done in the street in the open day, yet the Grand Jury could find no bill, and I was obliged to pay half the costs, for bringing a matter frivolous and vexatious before the Court. But they asked and obtained leave of the Judge to present me ; and although they had no other evidence than an extract of a written letter, they soon found a bill ; and I was put to the bar, and tried for writing a libel on the community. The facts were acknowledged to be true ; but then the said truth was a libel. Not being ready for trial, they endeavoured to postpone it, and to throw me into prison until the next Sessions ; but this being overruled, the indictment was quashed. Such was the injustice and oppression I experienced, that A. Hodge, Esq., who was afterwards executed for cruelty to his negroes, offered to stand my security ; and the Magistrate who assaulted me sat on the bench. The effects of this persecution were, to unfit me for the work of the Mission, and, in all probability, caused the death of my wife. But this outrage did not alter the fact ; there was neither church nor public worship : So, to roll away the reproach, they began to read prayers in the Court-House, and have since built a church.

MR. PATTISON.

WHEN I was in St. Vincent, H. H., Esq., a Magistrate, and one of the members of Council for the island, was celebrating St. Patrick's day with other gentlemen of the island. I was informed afterwards, that they had intended committing the depredations I am going to relate, before the light appeared ; but in this they were disappointed ; for they did not arrive till about sun-rise. Then this gentleman headed some officers of the Buffs, (a regiment then at St. Vincent,) with other gentlemen of the island, and, accompanied by the band of that regiment, came down to our chapel. The first thing they did,

was to throw down a high rail-fence near the road, which stood between the chapel and our dwelling-house, about fifty or sixty feet long. They then broke open the outer gate that led to the chapel door : This door they also broke open, and entered the chapel in triumph. They then broke nearly all the lamps, tore down the communion rails, took the Holy Bible, and tore it to pieces, and strewed it on the floor. The band then struck up ; and, after dancing and shouting like men that had found great spoil, they left the chapel, and passed my door, where I was standing. Mr. H., the Magistrate, said to me, with a shrug and a most sarcastic smile, "Sir, I came here to keep the peace." His confederates then vociferated, and awfully blasphemed, and declared, that if I said a word, they would take me to the market, and give me a dreadful cart-whipping. I made application to the Governor for redress. He came to town the same day, and called the Council together. After their deliberations, his Excellency, in his way to the fort, called at my door, and said, "Well, Sir, what damage have these St. Patrick boys done you?" And when I had replied, his Excellency said that he would take care it should not happen again ; and for a year no persecution of any consequence took place : But when the celebration of St. Patrick's day arrived, I felt apprehensive that the gentlemen might pay us another visit. I therefore told Mr. Hallet, who was with me as my fellow-labourer, that we had better sleep at Mrs. Mitchel's, one of our friends who lived a little distance from the chapel. He consented ; and it was providential that we took this precaution ; for, in the dead of the night, some persons broke open our dwelling-house, and entered it ; and, as they were armed with swords and cutlasses, they struck about in the dark, no doubt intending to have struck us ; but, instead of that, they cut the furniture in the house, which bears to this day the marks of their violence. They went into the bed-chambers, turned up the beds, and apparently searched for us under them, and in every part of the house ; but we were not there, or in all probability we should have been murdered. Mrs. M., hearing the noise, came out of her house ; and one of the ruffians struck her with a bludgeon on the side of her face. Whether the gentleman above-mentioned headed this party also, the day of judgment will make manifest.

Some degree of hostility to Missionaries even Mr. Marryat admits, notwithstanding his sweeping exculpation of the colonists ; but then he has at hand a ready explanation. "They are only interfered with when, like Mr. Talboys, they preach doctrines which endanger the security of the white inhabitants, by exciting the negroes to disaffection and revolt." (Page 159.)

And then follows a statement in detail of the proceedings in Trinidad, in the case of Mr. Talboys, to countenance this insinuation against the Missionaries in general, by a supposed proof of the fact in the affair of Mr. Talboys. If, however, it should appear that even this case is not borne out, that it is fallaciously stated, and that, in reality, Mr. Talboys was guiltless of the charges made against him, then has Mr. Marryat run his race, and left the charge of intolerance in full force against that party in the West Indies against whom it was directed by those whom Mr. Marryat has attempted to refute.

It was no part of the design of this pamphlet to enter into the controversy on the Registry Bill, or to come forward to the support of any charges made by the writers who contend for its necessity, upon the internal policy of the West India colonies. Those gentlemen are quite equal to the task they have undertaken ; but as the Methodist Missionaries have been implicated in the controversy, their cause could not be abandoned. In the attacks thus made, Mr. Talboys is the only instance which such opponents have been able to adduce, to give colour to their general abuse and censures. On their own showing, it was but a poor and pitiful one, as, in fact, it proved nothing to the purpose, and was supported by nothing which could be called evidence. But as Mr. Marryat and his friends are disposed to make the most of it, it shall be particularly considered ; and it may be examined with the greater confidence, as the writer has before him all the documents necessary to its full explication ; which documents were verified in Demerara, where Mr. Talboys at present is pursuing his Missionary labours, by his affidavit before Major-General Murray, the Lieutenant-Governor of the colony.

The case, as stated by Mr. Marryat, is in substance as follows :—That information was given to General Hislop, that Mr. Talboys preached highly inflammatory and dangerous doctrines :—That Mr. Lewis Bryer and Mr. William Horn stated, that they had heard him address his congregation in words to the following effect : “ It is of no consequence of what colour ye are ; for the white men will be burning in hell, while all of you who have faith in the Gospel will be

enjoying bliss in heaven. It does not signify how heinous the crimes are that ye are guilty of, if ye return to me, and receive the sweet influence of the Gospel." Such was the version given by Messrs. Bryer and Horn of a part of Mr. Talboys's sermon :—That a petition, continues Mr. Marryat, was presented in his favour from several free coloured persons :—That another petition was presented against him by other free coloured persons, which charged him with being a man without education ; and stated, that his practice was to make proselytes among the coloured females, and to hold nocturnal meetings :—That Natty Makenzie, a mulatto girl, declared that Talboys threatened to excommunicate her, for paying half a dollar for seeing a play, which, he said, she ought to have given him :—That a petition, signed by several white inhabitants, represented, that the minds of the free coloured persons and slaves were perniciously influenced by dangerous doctrines of equality, calculated to propagate anarchy and insubordination, preached to them by Mr. Talboys :—That the Rev. Mr. Clapham denied the validity of Mr. Talboys's ordination, and his right to officiate in administering the sacrament, to baptize, or marry ; all which rights he not only claimed, but exercised :—That Governor Hislop, who had ordered the chapel to be shut up while the inquiry was pending, cautioned Mr. Talboys to be more guarded in his language, forbade him to preach after certain hours in the evening, and prohibited him from taking the surplice fees belonging to the Minister of the established Church :—And that, when Governor Hislop was called upon, by His Majesty's Ministers, to give an account of his conduct, he transmitted them copies of the different petitions referred to ; on perusal of which the friends of Mr. Talboys thought proper to desist from any further investigation.

This is Mr. Marryat's statement, which he professes to have taken from the records of the Colonial Department. Now for the facts of the case.

The reason why Mr. Talboys's friends took no further steps in the affair was not, as Mr. Marryat would have it understood, that they allowed the justice of General Hislop's pro-

ceedings ; but because the Governor who succeeded him showed his opinion of the treatment received by Mr. Talboys, by removing those restrictions on his labours which had been imposed by his predecessor. Mr. Marryat might not know this ; but if he in reality searched the records of the Colonial Department, he must have known that which would have given a different aspect to the affair, and the omission of which proves him guilty of a most unworthy unfairness. That same official document, the minutes of a Council held at the Government-House, the 20th of April, 1811, which made him acquainted with the charges exhibited by some of the inhabitants of Trinidad against Mr. Talboys, and with the restrictions he was placed under by the resolutions of that Council, likewise expressly states, that Mr. Talboys " solemnly denied " all the accusations laid to his charge, and that " Mr. Camm, an inhabitant of respectability, also declared and deposed, upon oath, that he believed the charges to be totally unfounded, as well from his having been a very constant attendant at the Methodist chapel, as from his personal knowledge and acquaintance with Mr. Talboys." Now, this being a part of the same official document which Mr. Marryat has made use of, it could not be overlooked. Who, after this, can doubt the bias of Mr. Marryat's mind ? And who is there who will not from this be convinced how little dependence is to be placed upon the representations of that party who are now so actively exerting themselves to prevent the blessings of Christianity from being imparted to the black population of the colonies ?

The deception at which Mr. Marryat has aimed is rendered more obvious from this circumstance also, that the mitigated proceedings of the Council can only be accounted for by the conviction wrought in them by the defence of Mr. Talboys, and the testimony of Mr. Camm, of his innocence, at least, of the principal charges brought against him. Had it been substantiated, that he had preached doctrines tending to insubordination, it would have been as much the duty, as it appears to have been the inclination, of the Governor and Council to expel him the island, according to the prayer of the white

petitioners. But it was the absence of all evidence in support of these charges, and the denial of them by Mr. Talboys, supported by the testimony of Mr. Camm, which induced the Governor to re-open the chapel, and allow Mr. Talboys to resume his ministry, though under some restrictions. While the inquiry was pending, the Governor shut up the chapel; when it was terminated, he re-opened it. Nothing could be more decisive, as to Mr. Talboys's acquittal of the charge of endangering the tranquillity of the colony by his doctrines. All this was to be found in the official documents; and if Mr. Marryat, as he intimates, perused them, then he has wilfully put out of sight what he knew would weaken his statements.

It may, indeed, be said, that the imposed restrictions on Mr. Talboys's ministry, at least prove him to have been in some respects culpable. They certainly seem to prove him incautious, though even the restrictions themselves prove, by their comparative mildness, that he was not criminal, which is Mr. Marryat's conclusion. But *prima facie* cases stand for nothing, in proceedings against the Ministers of religion in the West Indies; and the narrative given by the injured person on oath, to which we must now advert, supported as it is by collateral circumstances, is not partially, but completely, exculpatory, and exhibits a case of gross and shameful injustice. We doubt not but Governor Hislop had been insidiously prejudiced against Mr. Talboys, by persons whose rank in society might induce him to place too great a confidence in their representations. The most malicious deceptions have, in other cases, been practised upon Governors of West India islands; and this ought to determine them to act on no statements whatever, without previous examination.* But nothing

* A somewhat curious anecdote will illustrate this. Mr. Pattison relates, that when in the island of St. Vincent, he conducted himself towards the negroes in a less distant manner than is common among the whites, in order the more effectually to promote their instruction.

"This part of my conduct was represented to the Governor; and his Excellency was informed, I think by a member of the Council, that there were near twenty Missionaries on the island. How much was said beside, I know not; However, soon after, I received a note from Judge Ottley to this effect:

can excuse the conduct of Governor Hislop. He appears to have been first inflamed against Mr. Talboys for having administered the sacrament ; as though he did not know that every Methodist and Dissenting Minister has as much right (not merely abstract right, but right by the laws of his country) to administer that ordinance to his own congregation, as the Ministers of the national Church have to administer it to theirs. Of what concern was it to General Hislop, or to his Chaplain, whether Mr. Talboys's ordination were valid or not ? It was never pretended to be ordination according to the order of the Church of England ; it was not in a church he had administered the sacrament ; nor did he affect to be a Minister of the Church of England. He was, however, on this account, in the first instance, suddenly summoned to the

‘Drury Ottley’s compliments to Mr. Pattison, and requests his attendance, with the other Missionaries on the island, at the Council Chamber, where the Council is now sitting.’ My colleague and myself, the only Missionaries on the island, immediately obeyed the summons. We found his Excellency, Governor Seaton, with the greater part of the Council, together. Judge O. was the spokesman, and said, ‘Mr. Pattison, the Council has sent for you, to advertise you of what they think of dangerous tendency in your conduct.’ Here the Governor interrupted him, and said to me, ‘Sir, what number of Missionaries have you on the island ?’ I answered, ‘Only myself and my colleague now present.’ His Excellency then rose up, and, with a strong expression of disgust, said, addressing himself to the Council, ‘I told you there were only two ;’ and he showed his disapprobation at the attempt made to impose upon him, in saying there were nearly twenty Missionaries, by leaving the table, and approaching it no more while I stayed. Judge O. then said, while his Excellency was walking about the chamber, ‘Mr. P., we thought it right to advertise you, that we disapprove of your familiarity with black and coloured people.’ I then begged leave to observe, as a justification of my conduct, that I had seen a circular letter from the Bishop of London, as President of a Society in England, formed for the express purpose of sending out Missionaries for the instruction of the negroes in the West Indies ; and that his Lordship suggested in that letter that the Society conceived that the Missionaries to be sent should not associate much with the whites, but confine themselves chiefly to the free people of colour and blacks, and the slaves on the plantations. I think I further said, that I thought the Bishop and the Society understood sound policy, and would do nothing to affect prejudicially the policy of the West Indies. Judge O. then said, I might, if I pleased, write to the Bishop ; but I replied that I was not under the jurisdiction of his Lordship. He rejoined, ‘I know it.’ Here the matter ended, and I retired. I heard no more of the affair in this way.”

Government-House, treated with great harshness by the Governor, and ordered “to go instantly and shut up his chapel, and join himself to a military corps.” This he refused, and retired into the country. A party of soldiers were sent to his house early on the Sunday morning following, to take him to parade. Mrs. Talboys was abused, and obliged by these rough visitors to rise from her bed, that the room might be searched for him. After this came a second party, and so on to the fifth. A Corporal and two of the cavalry were then despatched into the country, in pursuit of the *deserter*. He was found eighteen miles from town, guarded back as a prisoner, and put in gaol till the next day. He was then released by order of the Governor, and informed by the Major of Police that he was at liberty to follow any business, but not to preach. Two gentlemen of the colony then went with him to the Government-House, to wait upon his Excellency, to know the reason of the treatment he had received ; and between one of these gentlemen and the Governor a smart altercation ensued ; the former requesting that Mr. Talboys might be treated as a British subject, and not insulted and imprisoned without a trial. This his Excellency at length promised. A few days after, Mr. Talboys received a list of charges, not of having “ profanely ” administered the sacrament, the only cause at first alleged for shutting up the chapel, ordering him into the army, and putting him in prison ; but such as he had not before heard mentioned,—of preaching seditious doctrines, &c. The Governor gave a public invitation to all who had any thing against him to come forward with their proofs. In something more than a fortnight after, Mr. Talboys sent a petition to the Governor to hasten the day of his trial, but received no answer. At length a day was fixed ; but no person appeared before the Council to prove any thing, though the Governor had waited thirty-nine days for the exhibition of proofs. Instead of witnesses, the petition mentioned by Mr. Marryat was put in, but not one of those who signed it came forward to depose to the truth of its allegations ; whilst, as it has been stated, one gentleman denied them on oath, and the whole thirty who signed the petition in

Mr. Talboys's favour were ready to give their oaths also, in attestation of the falsehood of the accusations preferred against him. As to Messrs. Bryer and Horn, the caricaturists of Mr. Talboys's sermon, and Miss Natty Mackenzie, they were kept so secret, that Mr. Talboys never heard of their accusations against him, till he received the information from England a twelvemonth afterwards ; and with respect to the charge of invading the surplice fees of the Clergyman, Mr. Talboys's attested narrative declares that he neither married, buried, nor baptized any person during General Hislop's administration there.*

* Burial and baptism may doubtless be performed by the Dissenting Clergy by the laws of Great Britain. Marriage cannot be legally performed in England by any but the Clergy of the national Church. This law does not extend to Scotland, and we think not to the colonies, except it be in the form of an internal regulation in some of the islands. With the whites the Missionaries have little to do ; and where they have performed any of these rites, they have not, as it would seem from the following statement, derived much benefit from "surplice fees." "In Tortola," says a Missionary, (Mr. Dixon,) "they have a small new church, but had no Minister till a few months back. The Methodist Missionaries were the only Ministers on the whole island. All, white and black, were baptized by us *gratis* ; and all who died, white and black, were buried by us *gratis* too."

In Newfoundland, and the other British colonies in North America, it has been the regular practice for the Methodist and Dissenting Missionaries to marry all classes ; and for the best reasons : Neither was the Marriage Act supposed to extend to them ; nor were there, in many places, any Clergymen of the Establishment, nor any within the reach of many of the settlements, because travelling is often precarious, and sometimes impracticable. The propriety of this practice was never questioned, until lately in Newfoundland by the present Governor, who, it seems, has decided that that colony is comprehended in the provisions of the Marriage Act. It happens, however, rather unfortunately for that construction, that even the greater part of the marriages celebrated by the Clergy there are thereby vitiated ; for they have not usually married by licence or banns ; and it is not a little singular, if the fact be as it has been represented, that whilst the Governor has prohibited Missionaries of every denomination from marrying, the Catholic Priests are permitted to celebrate that rite. These proceedings have produced considerable dissatisfaction in that colony ; but it is a subject of dispute into which the managing Committee of the Wesleyan Missions have no design to enter. The regulation of the forms of marriage they consider as wholly belonging to the civil Magistrate. No right of conscience is involved, and therefore no right of that kind is in question, which it is the duty of those who have the direction of Missions (institutions purely religious) to support. If the people

This, then, is the single case on which Mr. Marryat and others have depended in order to excite suspicions and promote persecuting laws against Missionaries. We are glad it has been adduced, and it may safely be left with the public: It adds to the evidence of the existence of a most intolerant party in certain of the islands, and also at home; and proves that they are by no means scrupulous as to the means they adopt to gratify their enmities. The whole may be properly closed with the substance of a letter to Mr. Talboys from the King's Attorney-General at Trinidad, after the proceedings against him had been closed, and Governor Hislop had left the island. He laments the treatment Mr. Talboys had experienced, and considers his patience as greatly meritorious. He strongly expresses his conviction of the benefits resulting from the religious instruction of the slaves, and his regard for religious toleration. "The Toleration Acts," he observes, "travel with the British flag," and, on this principle, asserts the illegality of the proceedings with respect to Mr. Talboys; recommends an early application to the newly-arrived Governor, to remote the restrictions imposed upon him by General Hislop and the Council; and concludes by saying, "I shall with gratitude and pleasure give instructions for your reception at Providence Estate, where, I trust, my negroes will become more honest, more industrious, more temperate, more charitable towards each other, and more religious, by the effects of your pious and benevolent care." Such were the sentiments entertained of the character and labours of this persecuted Missionary by a member of the local Government, and under whose eye all the proceedings against Mr. Talboys had passed.*

of any colony are put to insuperable inconvenience, in consequence of such proceedings as have lately taken place in Newfoundland, it is for the colonists themselves to seek relief from the parent Government, and not the conductors of Missions. The case of the West India slaves rests on another ground. The marriage of persons in a state of slavery, performed by the Missionaries, is rather to be considered as a religious than as a civil act; the law not contemplating the slaves in this respect at all. It has no punishment for their polygamy, and has prescribed no rule for their marriage.

* The Committee are in possession of several authenticated testimonials in favour of the excellent conduct of Mr. Talboys in different islands, especially

VII.—CHARGES AGAINST THE METHODIST MISSIONARIES.

IT has been before observed, that the Wesleyan Missionaries have been singled out as the special objects of attack by the anti-Mission party. They have, however, confined themselves to general charges, than which nothing can be easier to devise, or more convenient to brandish. In the case of Mr. Talboys, they condescend to become specific ; but this single case, the only one, it would seem, Mr. Marryat could furnish himself with, or his friends direct him to, affords a strong presumption against the truth of the general charges so often and so loudly urged ; for, on the supposition of their general truth, it is most remarkable that the annals of the Methodist Mission would not enable its enemies to adduce many individual cases in illustration. We have just seen how little Mr. Marryat has served either his cause or his argument by bringing forward the case of Mr. Talboys, whose opposers would doubtless have been better satisfied had it been suffered to sleep in the records of the Colonial Department. The general

one from Baron Stackelberg, Governor of St. Bartholomew, where Mr. Talboys resided two years as a Missionary, addressed to the Governor of Demerara, and dated March 15th, 1815. In Demerara he pursued his labours without inconvenience or opposition, until the arrival of Mr. Marryat's pamphlet in that colony. What effect was produced by it, the following extract of a letter from that injured Missionary will show. It is dated Demerara, October 28th, 1816.

“ Since I wrote to you last I have had many unpleasant things to conflict with. I then observed to you that Mr. Marryat's pamphlet had raised loud cries against me. On the night of the 30th of August, a party of men broke open our chapel, took several benches therefrom, and broke them to pieces in the street ; and have several times since annoyed us by stoning our house in the night. As to myself, I am considered by many as an execrable wretch, that ought to be put out of the world.”

If the anti-Mission party should be elated by this intelligence, their feelings will probably be moderated by the statement, that the Mission there was never in circumstances so prosperous ; that the society has, within a year, increased more than a third, and now amounts to seven hundred ; and that the increase of hearers has demanded an enlargement of the chapel, by the erection of a gallery : Thus does God “ make the wrath of man to praise him.”

allegations in which he and his friends indulge will not, it is presumed, meet a better fate.

One of the modern stratagems resorted to by this party to cover the real cause of the attacks made upon the Methodist Missions, is to distinguish between them and other Missions; and to urge that they cannot be unfriendly to Missions in general, because they approve of, and countenance, the Moravian Missions. It is Methodism alone which they are desirous to restrict: This distinction is made in the Report of the Jamaica Assembly; it is reiterated in the Colonial Journal, and echoed by most of the writers against the Registry Bill.

This fallacious pretence is easily exposed. When the account of the Moravian Missions in the West Indies shall make its appearance, it will be seen whether they had no difficulties to surmount from the prejudices and intolerance of colonists; but it is not necessary to wait for this: The evidence required to prove the hostility of this party to all Missions indiscriminately, is furnished by the public acts of Colonial Legislatures. The Bermuda persecuting law, before-mentioned, was enacted to prevent the preaching of "Missionaries from any religious society whatever." And though the Jamaica Report states, that the Moravians have been "received" in that island for half a century, its authors forgot to state also, that the clause appended to the consolidated slave laws in 1807 was no less directed against them than the Methodist and other Missionaries: "Provided, nevertheless, that the instruction of such slaves shall be confined to the doctrines of the established Church; and that no Methodist Missionary, or other sectary or Preacher, shall presume to instruct our slaves, or receive them into their houses, chapels, or conventicles, under a fine of twenty pounds for every slave proved to have been there."

After such indiscriminate laws, it is a wretched fiction that the intolerance which dictated them was not indiscriminate in its application. The very same Jamaica Report which affects the distinction in favour of the Moravians, shows the temper of the writers towards them by affirming that, after half a century of labour, "the slaves under their care do not appear

superior to their pagan neighbours." And it may also be asked, if the sentiment of respect and preference for the Moravian Missionaries be sincere, why they have not been invited to instruct the slaves on those plantations where the Methodist Missionaries are working such infinite mischief, or, at least, where neither the Clergy nor other Missionaries are employed to instruct them? But where the Methodist Missionaries have been refused admittance to estates, or have been silenced by acts of Legislature, no other means of communicating religious knowledge to the slaves has been adopted by their owners; and this circumstance alone is sufficient to show that the objection does not lie so much against the agents as against the work itself in which they are employed.* If no objection existed in the minds of the opponents of Methodist Missionaries to Missions to the slaves in general, the ill success of the benevolent plans of the excellent Bishop Porteus can scarcely be accounted for. It is well known in those islands where the Missionaries sent out under his patronage fixed their stations, that they met, in some instances, with greater opposition in their work than even the Methodist Missionaries; and for a very obvious reason,—they brought more authority and sanction to it. "His success," says the biographer of this distinguished Prelate, "fell short of his hopes. The chief difficulty always has been, and still continues to be, an invincible reluctance on the part of proprietors and planters of estates in our

* The following answers were sent by the Missionaries whose names follow, to the subjoined question proposed by the Committee:—

"When slaves were prevented by their masters from being instructed by you, did they procure their religious instruction by any other means?"

"They did not."—**MR. PATTISON.**

"I believe not."—**MR. DIXON.**

"I know not of a single instance."—**MR. FISH.**

"I never heard of one master who did so."—**MR. GILGRASS.**

"The wish of those who refused our labours was, that their slaves might continue in ignorance."—**MR. CAMPBELL.**

"The opposition of the masters, generally, was not to our instructing the slaves, but to their being instructed at all."—**MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR.**

"When the masters wished their instruction, they often applied to us in preference to all others; when they did not, the negroes remained uninstructed."—**MR. WILLIS.**

West India colonies effectually to promote any plan, however quietly and prudently conducted, for the Christian education of their negro slaves.”*

The biographer mentions “some honourable exceptions,” and we could adduce many; but it is a fact which should not be lost sight of, and especially by the Primate of the English national Church, who has announced his intention to provide for the more effectual instruction of those islands, that the root of the difficulty still lies where it was found by Bishop Porteus. If such additional provision for the religious care of the negroes be made, under the idea that the hostility manifested against Missionary exertions has chiefly been directed, as the Jamaica Report professes, against Methodism, the event will not justify the presumption, at least in that island.† If the great work be effectually promoted by the Church, the agents must be selected with a view to the difficulties which will assuredly occur; they must be men who will be content to share with even “sectarian Missionaries,” as they are called, their full proportion, not only of labour, but of reproach also, if they would fulfil the ministry assigned them.

To return to the distinction now set up between the Methodist and Moravian Missionaries. Though the same principle of enmity exists with respect to both, it is acknowledged, and it is easily accounted for, that the former have had the largest share of its effects. But this eminence of contempt, persecution, and injury in the case of the Methodists, more decidedly

* Life of Porteus, page 115.

† “In the beginning of 1796,” says Mr. Fish, a Jamaica Missionary, “Bishop Porteus sent out the Rev. R. Munn, D. D., a truly excellent man, as a Missionary to the negroes. In a letter he favoured me with he says, ‘The Governor showed me every mark of respect, by introducing me to his friends at a public dinner, and by laying my authorities in a formal way before the House of Assembly, and for their sanction; but very few indeed paid any other attention to the affair than a few frothy compliments to the poor unworthy Missionary in question.’ Thus, a Clergyman of the established Church, and expressly authorized by the Bishop of London, though he met with more civility, had scarcely more encouragement than a Methodist. Dr. Munn, having preached only five sermons, was called to his reward; and the good Bishop was so discouraged by his treatment and death, that he did not appoint another.”

proves the aversion of the opposing part of the colonists to their object than to them. Against the Methodists this spirit has more frequently been directed, because they have more frequently confronted it, and oftenest placed themselves within the sphere of its operation. The principal Moravian stations are in the Danish islands, where they have raised noble monuments of Missionary zeal and success, and not in British islands. The only stations they occupy in our own colonies are four ; and in two of them, Antigua and St. Kitt's, where their establishments are large, the Methodists have not, any more than they, at any time, been persecuted ; in their other two stations, Jamaica and Barbadoes, where the spirit of hostility to Missions has unquestionably existed, the Moravians have had but little success : In fifty years after the commencement of their Mission in Jamaica, they had not baptized more than nine hundred and thirty-eight negroes ; and their success in Barbadoes has not been much greater. In Barbadoes the Methodists have been as unsuccessful as they ; but in Jamaica their present societies amount to more than three thousand, with congregations four or five times that amount, in different parts of the island ; besides which, they have spread themselves through the British colonies, and there is scarcely an island, great or small, where they have not established a Mission, built chapels, and got access to estates. It is evident, therefore, that the Moravians have escaped the same degree of opposition, because they have not been so much within its reach ; their important labours have been chiefly in foreign islands, and in those of our own, chiefly, where the planters have a milder and more tolerant character. It may be well enough for the colonists to cover their general opposition to religion by affecting respect for the Moravian Missions in those islands where they are not, or in others where their numbers are small, and exhibit few or very recent symptoms of increase ; but this does not prove that the excellent Missionaries of that body are at all more loved, only that, from circumstances, they are less troublesome.

The itinerant system adopted by the Methodist Missionaries will also further account for the greater opposition they have experienced. The Moravian, with invincible patience, con-

tinues to till even a barren field, while any hope of ultimate fertility remains ; and when the soil repays his toil, he chooses rather to add to its dimensions by enlarging his enclosure into the neighbouring wilderness, than hastily to go and make a distinct enclosure at a distance. The Methodist Missionary, without neglecting the place where God has succeeded his work, enters into every new door of usefulness which may open before him, and is secure of a supply of fellow-labourers from home to enter into his former labours, or to prosecute, in the new station, the Mission he has commenced. We are not comparing the two systems to determine their respective excellencies, but adducing the fact to account for that bitterness of unhallowed zeal with which the Methodist Missionaries have been from the first, and still continue, in many places, to be, assaulted ; and to show that any difference which the colonial party who oppose them may make between them and others, affords no proof at all of their favouring Missions generally, but that the whole is either a false pretence, or arises out of circumstances rather than principle. In what manner they are affected by the itinerating plan of the Methodist Missionaries will appear from the note below.* That the opposition to this plan arises out of its efficiency in communicating the knowledge of Christianity to the negroes, appears from this, —that they cannot be reached in any other way ; and if the now professed desire for the Christianizing of the slaves were real, they would scarcely urge the sacrifices, and self-denial, and excessive labours of the Christian Missionary to accomplish this end as a formidable charge against him : It would be new, indeed, to impeach a person for his zeal in accomplishing a work on which we had set our hearts !

But we have the direct, though general, charges against the Missionaries, of preaching “seditious doctrines,” “baneful and pestilent tenets,” “which endanger the security of the white inhabitants, by exciting the negroes to disaffection and revolt:”

* “The necessity of discouraging undefined and undefinable itinerant preaching has been fully appreciated, both in theory and from experience, by some of the Colonial Assemblies, and they have very properly attempted to discourage them by legislative enactments.”—*Colonial Journal*, No. I.

“A dangerous fanaticism, productive of the most fatal consequences.” Thus the Council of St. Vincent, Mr. Marryat, the authors of the Jamaica Report, and others,

Fædam glomerant tempestatem imbris atris,

to sweep away from the islands both the Missionaries themselves, and the fruit of their labours. But, with respect to these allegations, we ask instances and proofs. They are not now urged for the first time; they have been made through almost every successive year of the Mission, without as yet being verified; and if instances more recent and more verifiable have occurred, none are more anxious to be made acquainted with them, than the Managing Committee, under whose direction the Missionaries act.

It would be to demand too much from them to be responsible for the conduct of every Missionary they employ. With whatever care they are selected, however explicit the instructions which are given them, however carefully the Mission is superintended, the Committee may, in some instances, be deceived; in the present state of human infirmity, the best characters may, in some cases, deteriorate; and in the colonies, where no Missionary can wholly forget that he is an Englishman, circumstances of painful and harsh oppression may arise, and exhaust his patience, and induce a violent and resentful conduct not to be justified. In such cases, however, a sweeping censure, involving every Missionary, and the motives and objects of those who direct them, would be most uncandid and unjust. Would the Prelate, whoever he may be, on whom devolves the ecclesiastical superintendence of the British West India colonies, provided a plan were adopted to supply the deficiency of clerical instructers of the negroes, in this rigid sense, allow himself to be made responsible for the conduct of all whom he might appoint to this office? Would he think it fair to be involved in the charge of intending to disturb the peace of the islands, were any of the Clergy appointed by him to act with imprudence? Would it be candid to involve every other Missionary Clergyman in the misconduct of an individual? Had such instances of criminal or impudent con-

duct occurred, therefore, in the case of any Wesleyan Missionary, or one of any other society, nothing but a wish to bring Missions in general into discredit, nothing but intolerance and illiberality, could fix a general stigma upon a whole body, or attack the directors of any Missionary institution, unless it could be shown that the conduct of their Missionaries was generally improper ; that their instructions sanctioned their conduct ; or that their directors had neglected to disown or discard the offending individual. It seems not unreasonable to expect that the colonists ought, on the contrary, to feel grateful to those who undertake the task of making their slaves wiser and better ; and who, by moralizing them, prolong their days, preserve their health, give to their service the force of obligation, and thus put into action a principle of industry and faithfulness more powerful and more uniform than the whip ; and, along with these effects, so beneficial to the master, conciliate the tempers of the slaves, and diminish those fears of insurrection, and its accompanying atrocities, which so distressingly haunt the imagination of the white inhabitants of the West Indies. These are works which are surely worth gratitude ; and, provided that the instructions given by the Managers of the Missionary institutions to their Missionaries, contain every thing favourable to such objects, that their institutions are purely religious, and that they exercise a proper discipline over the persons they employ in this work, there appears no reason why such gratitude ought not to be expressed, at least, in their protection and encouragement. But if this be a reasonable demand, what can justify the only remuneration this party would make, coarse abuse and violent opposition, and that without a fact to justify either ? In the case of the Methodist Missionaries, those who have the direction of them know of no instance of any of them having preached, or of any who now preach, seditious doctrines. In the course of more than thirty years, no complaint of this kind, either from any of the Missionaries against their brethren, or from any other quarter, where it had the appearance of being more than one of those general aspersions, so frequently made by heated partisans in every cause, has

ever reached them ; nor does their knowledge of the character and conduct of the Missionaries of other religious societies afford any instance of such misconduct on their part, in which the Methodist Missionaries could be involved from the indiscriminate application of the term Methodist to Missionaries of every denomination.

The absence of all individual instances in the charges made by their enemies, might be sufficient to indicate this ; but that there might be an explicit testimony put on record on this subject, the following question was put to all the Missionaries who have returned from the West Indies, and who are now in no manner whatever connected with the Mission :—

“ Do you know that any of our Missionaries, or those of any other religious body, have at any time preached seditious doctrines, or doctrines tending to produce feelings of enmity in the minds of the negroes towards the whites ? ”

MR. DACE.

I KNOW of no one instance of this kind.

MR. DIXON.

I KNOW of none.

MR. CAMPBELL.

I NEVER heard of any Missionary who ever taught, or even thought of teaching, such doctrines as are referred to in the query.

MR. FISH.

It was said by some in Jamaica, that a Preacher (an American refugee, but no Methodist) taught doctrines tending to insubordination ; but I know of no corresponding fruit which his doctrines produced ; and I suppose the charge was a malicious one ; but I do not undertake to defend the man’s character in every respect. Not only our Missionaries, but also our Local Preachers, white, coloured, and black, strenuously enforced obedience to authority, both public and domestic. I was intimate with Mr. Read, the Scotch Missionary ; was acquainted with Mr. Swaigle, and had some knowledge of the Baptist Preachers, and had occasional intercourse (though our places of residence were far distant) with Messrs. Brown, Lister, and Howell, Moravian Missionaries. I am very confident their preaching had no dangerous tendency.

MR. JOHN TAYLOR.

I NEVER knew a single instance of the kind, either among ourselves or any other body of people.

MR. WARRENER.

No, our motto was, and I hope still is, "Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honour the King." Preach sedition? God forbid! we preach Christ, and universal love to all mankind, both bond and free.

The instructions uniformly given the Missionaries before their appointment, could only lead to this result. Men going forth to accomplish a specific object, to which they were directed to turn their whole attention, without mingling any foreign or worldly considerations with it, and this, as the only condition of their being employed and continued in the work, and of the approbation and sanction of those to whose direction they were committed, were not likely, in many cases, to become politicians and civil reformers; nor is there any instance known by the Managing Committee, where this character has been assumed by the Missionaries under their superintendence. They have been constantly instructed to consider their object and appointment as purely religious; not to interfere at all in the civil relations of master and slave, except by enforcing the Christian precept on that point;* and, as far as they could, with a good conscience, and consistently with the great business of instructing and Christianizing the negro slaves, to conform to the regulations, and even prejudices, of the whites. Such instructions were supposed to have the authority of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Christianity found a great portion of society in the civilized world, to which it was first communicated, in a state of absolute servitude; but it neither sanctioned the practice of slavery, nor directly abrogated it. It taught men duties suitable to the circumstances in which it found them. It gave no plans of civil government, nor systems of political regulation. It taught all men mercy, justice, peace, sobriety, diligence, and brotherly love; and left those great principles

* "Servants," *δούλοι*, *slaves*, "obey in all things your masters according to the flesh," &c. (Col. iii. 22.)

gradually to work that amelioration, in the civil state and relations of society, in which all would be equally interested. By this model the Methodist Missionaries have been directed to conduct themselves in the West Indies ; and if, indeed, the indirect and ultimate effect of the Christianity they preach, should be the same as the Christianity of the first ages, with which they hope it accords ; if there should be in it a principle averse to slavery, and in its issue destructive of it, a position which the friends of Missions do not affect to deny ; yet it is to be recollected, that the modern Missionaries are not, on this account, any more than the primitive Preachers of Christianity, political characters ; that their objects are still purely religious ; that any objections to them on probable ultimate results, lie with equal force against Christianity itself, and against all Missionaries who teach it, whether of the Establishment or not. Even the colonists of Jamaica cannot make this a reason for opposing Missions, when they have put it on record, in an official document, that they themselves do not object to the abolition of the system of domestic slavery, which now exists among them, being left to some such gradual operation of principles and events as finally abolished domestic slavery in the states of Europe. In that section of the Report of the Committee to the House of Assembly in Jamaica, entitled, "Profane and Scriptural History of Slavery," after remarking on the causes which produced the abrogation of slavery in the Roman empire, and in modern Europe, the reporters conclude :—

What is the fair deduction from these cases ? That time, and the regular course of human affairs, will accomplish in the British colonies what they brought about in the Roman empire, and modern Europe ; without direct legal enactments, and little assistance from any positive institutions.

As the Methodist Missionaries have been instructed to confine their thoughts and efforts solely to the Christian instruction of the negroes, without either defending or opposing the system of slavery, or entering into any civil questions whatever, so they have fulfilled their trust ; and instead of pro-

moting insubordination, and feelings of enmity towards the whites, the doctrines they have constantly preached have had an effect directly opposite.

Nor have those doctrines expended themselves merely in tendencies to quiet and submission ; but, as will fully appear before the close of this section, they have absolutely produced them, and in cases where there were even motives and temptations to the contrary. With respect to the doctrines they have preached, the Missionaries shall speak for themselves ; and let those who have heard them, if they are able, confute the statement. The case is before them, and they are called upon to dispute it. But witnesses of a different description from Messrs. Bryer and Horn, and Miss Natty MacKenzie, will be expected.

MR. PATTISON.

I NEVER did, in one instance, attempt to dispute the right of the masters to the services of the slaves ; and if, at any time, there appeared any thing like complaining, the substance of what I said to them may be comprehended in the words of St. Paul, “If thou art a servant, care not for it.” We inculcated upon them the duty of servants to their masters, without attempting to establish or to invalidate the claim which the system of slavery gave the masters over their slaves.

MR. BROWNELL.

WE preached the plain principles of the Christian religion, in the same manner as we do in England, only with greater plainness of language ; and we advised as many “servants as were under the yoke,” to be faithful and diligent, to please their masters in all things, according to St. Paul’s direction.

MR. WARRENER.

WE taught the slaves, as St. Paul taught the slaves in his day, “to obey their masters in all things ; not answering again, not purloining, but showing all fidelity, as becometh Christians.”

MR. JOHN TAYLOR.

WE taught them to act in the most obliging and faithful manner ; often warning them against lying, stealing, and insolence ; indeed, many of their masters are witnesses of these things, having heard us themselves both on their estates, and in our chapels.

MR. FISH.

WE taught those negroes to whom we had access, as the Apostles taught persons in a similar condition. (Eph. vi. 5, 8 ; Col. iii. 22, 25 ; 1 Peter ii. 13, 25.)

MR. DIXON.

WE have always said, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh ; not with eye-service, as menpleasers ; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance ; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done ; and there is no respect of persons."

MR. WILLIS.

WE taught them to behave with all due respect, with obedience, with diligence, and fidelity.

The answers of the Missionaries to the following questions may also properly have a place here. A few only are inserted, the rest being in all respects, except the words used, the same.

"HAVE you observed that the mental improvement of the slaves under your care, rendered them more impatient of slavery, and more desirous of emancipation, than the uninstructed and vicious ?"

MR. BROWNELL.

No ; they were more faithful, obedient, and attached to their owners, when treated as rational creatures. Yet many domestic slaves in towns, principally mulattoes, and those who had trades, paid their owners so much per month, and with the overplus of their labours purchased their freedom. When they could be free in this way, they chose it rather.

MR. PATTISON.

I HAVE seen, in hundreds of instances, the very reverse of impatience. I have heard many, who had been brought from Africa, bless God, with the strongest emotions, and with tears, for having made their slavery the means of bringing them acquainted with the Gospel.

MR. FISH.

THE mental and religious improvement of the slaves renders them contented in their condition.

MR. GILGRASS.

I NEVER observed any impatience among them, during the ten years I was in the West Indies.

MR. CAMPBELL.

I ALWAYS avoided talking with them about their liberty; but I am of opinion they thought less about it than those not under our care.

MR. JOSEPH TAYLOR.

WHERE there has been most mental improvement there has been least discontent and murmuring.

If it should be objected, that this is *ex parte* evidence, (and objections of every kind, in the present temper of the anti-Mission party, are to be expected,) it shall be next demonstrated, that the statements made by the Missionaries, of the doctrines preached, and the effects produced by them in the colonies, are true; because they cannot be false; that, from the duration, extent, and circumstances of the Mission, it is not possible that the doctrine taught by the Missionaries should have been “dangerous,” or injurious in its effects upon the minds of the slaves.

The scenes of Missionary labour are either in the towns, or on the estates. That it was not practicable in either case for them to preach the tenets attributed to them, the following considerations will make manifest.

In towns, the places of worship are chiefly chapels built for the purpose, to which all colours and ranks have free access. The times of service are as regular and as well known there as in England; and there is in no place any congregation but of which whites not only may, but actually do, form a part. Of almost every Methodist society in the towns in the West Indies, whites, also, form a part, though a small one; and they are found in much greater numbers either as regular or occasional hearers. Every person who is acquainted with society in the West Indies knows, that white people of every description partake in the wakeful alarms which the circumstances of the islands excite; that, from prevailing prejudices, the white members of even religious societies do not completely amalgamate and fraternize with negroes; because that would

be to oppose all the rules of civil life, as established in the colonies ; and were even this the case, they are aware that, in the event of an insurrection, the vast majority of uninstructed negroes is such, that any regards which religious negroes might feel towards the whites from whom they had received care and kindness, would be overborne in a dreadful contest which, from the numbers who have been left in a savage state, could know no party distinction but black and white. The persons and property, therefore, of the white people, who may be members of the Methodist societies, or hearers of their Missionaries, are as much involved in the quiet of the colonies, as those of the opposers of Missions ; and in the presence of such persons, were all others less favourable to Missions even excluded, no such doctrines as have been attributed to the Missionaries would be tolerated. But much has been said of nocturnal meetings : May not the seditious part of the doctrines be reserved for them ? To this it may be replied, that the meetings held latest by the Missionaries have been on the estates, to accommodate the slaves, who, in crop time, continue their labours longer than at other seasons of the year ; and then the meetings have sometimes commenced at eight o'clock, or even later ; but the service has been shortened, and every thing done on the estate is under the eye of the overseer. In towns, no meeting commences later than seven in the evening ; nor is it usually continued longer than eight. In some instances, it is true, the negroes have held meetings among themselves for singing and prayer, which have continued late ; but this has but rarely occurred, and has been uniformly discountenanced by the Missionaries ; not, indeed, that the practice was at all worse than that of the irreligious negroes, who frequently spend whole nights in dancing and riot ; but because the former was more disagreeable to the inhabitants, in some places, than the latter, which, though often productive of the worst consequences to morals, they took no pains to suppress.

Mr. Marryat, in the case of Mr. Talboys, endeavours to insinuate something, also, as to meetings held within “locked doors.” That the doors are never locked, except it may be

for the sake of protection from some brutal assault of rabble, may be safely affirmed ; that the doors are closed when those private meetings of catechumens are held, which we have before mentioned, is to be supposed ; for the object of the meetings being to teach such as are distinguished from the rest by their desire to be taught, it is not probable that they should be held in the open chapel. The frequent presence of whites, and even their superintendence, (for these meetings are not always conducted by the Missionaries,) are, however, sufficient pledges of the innocence of assemblies, without which the objects of the Mission would be but very imperfectly answered, inasmuch as public preaching is a very defective means of instructing men who, as the Jamaica Report confesses, are generally ignorant of a Deity, and, of course, of the very first principles of the Christian faith. But that, whatever may be said or done among the slaves, whether privately or publicly, has no tendency, except to promote their peaceableness and fidelity, has a decided proof in the fact, that no slave, under the care of the Missionaries, has ever been detected in a single conspiracy. On this subject the most positive testimony might be brought forward ; but it is not, in this place, necessary to adduce it, because no contrary instance has been given. A few statements may, however, be introduced, because they refer to times, places, and persons, and will afford the enemies of Missions the full advantage of examining them, should they feel the least encouragement to make the attempt.

Mr. Pattison thus answers the question, “ Have any religious slaves, to your knowledge, been concerned in conspiracies ? ”

I FEEL happy that this question has been put to me ; as I apprehend there is no Missionary now living, who has been employed in the West Indies, that can give, from his own knowledge, a more satisfactory answer ; having been in circumstances in which, had there been any inclination to revolt in the religious negroes, it could not, with greater impunity, have showed itself. I was stationed in Grenada, at the time the dreadful insurrection took place there, and in the island of St. Vincent. It is true, at the time of its bursting forth, I had left Grenada to visit an island called Cariacou, with an intention to stop there two or three weeks, and preach to the negroes.

I had a letter of recommendation from the Rev. Mr. Dent, to Colonel Backtel, who was a member of Council for the island of Grenada; and I continued in his house for six months, and aided, under his direction, to defend that island. All that time I was kept from returning to Grenada, in consequence of the insurrection; but, at the end of six months, Colonel Backtel and myself went down in the Zebra, sloop of war. When I arrived there, that fine flourishing island presented a most dreadful appearance; I found that many of our society had fallen through excessive fatigue, or had been slain by the sword; and I was happy to learn, that not one who had received instruction from us, and was under our care, had showed the least disposition to join the brigands; but, on the contrary, they evinced the most steady determination to oppose those insurgents. After stopping a few days in this scene of confusion, dread, and alarm, I got permission from the President to leave the island. I then went to St. Kitt's; and after being some time there, Mr. Owens being obliged to leave St. Vincent, on account of his health, I went to supply his place, and was there near eighteen months, during the insurrection; and although, at times, we were exposed to the most imminent danger, and could only act at best upon the defensive, yet I never saw the least disposition in any of the negroes under our care to insurrection or rebellion, though we had several hundreds in our society. But, when it became necessary, for the defence of the island, to raise a corps of black rangers, those in our society were made choice of as the most confidential.

DR. COKE.

SOON after the commencement of the French revolutionary war, the Governor of the island of Tortola received information that the French of Guadalupe meditated a descent on that island. He immediately sent for Mr. Turner, the Superintendent of the Missions in Tortola and the other Virgin Islands, and informed him of the intelligence, adding, that there was no regular force in the island adequate to the defence of it against an invading foe, unless they armed the blacks; but they were afraid to do this, unless he (Mr. Turner) would put himself at the head of them. Mr. Turner was conscious that such a step was not directly within the line of his ministerial office; but he considered that the island was in imminent danger; and that, if it were conquered by the French, all the religious privileges and blessings which even the negroes enjoyed, under our excellent King and constitution, would, most probably, be entirely lost, and also, that this was only a defensive business; and for these reasons, joined with the genuine spirit of loyalty, he consented, and was accordingly armed, with all the negroes. In a fortnight after this, a

French squadron made its appearance in Tortola-Bay ; but the French, being probably informed by some emissaries, of the armed force of the island, which far exceeded their own, gave up the design, and retired.

Soon after the above event, the Governor General of the Leeward Islands sent to the Missionaries in those islands, to desire them to make a return of all the negroes in their societies who were able to bear arms. The return was accordingly made ; and a great part, if not all of them, were armed for the defence of the islands, respectively, from the confidence which the Governor General had in the loyalty of the Missionaries and their flocks.—*Annual Report for 1804.*

MR. BROWNELL.

THE religious negroes were entrusted with arms, during the last war, properly disciplined, and contributed very materially to the preservation of St. Christopher's.

The following extract of a letter from Mr. Dace, a Missionary who returned from the West Indies a few months ago, affords, also, a striking proof of the civil advantages resulting from the operation of Missions :—

AMONGST the many unspeakable advantages which have resulted from the Missions in the West Indies, a very evident one appears at the season of Christmas. At this period the negroes in general have some time allowed them for holidays. They have also a certain portion of provision allotted. It is well known that, thirty years ago, they used to spend their time at this festival in gluttony, drunkenness, quarrelling, fighting, dancing, and carousing ; and, in general, very much mischief was done by them. The island of Nevis, for instance, may serve as a specimen. This is the native place of Mrs. Dace ; and she can well remember, that if the managers did not deal out the Christmas allowance to please the slaves, they, out of resentment, would do any mischief to the estates which lay in their way. Sometimes they would go and set fire to a whole piece or track of sugar-canies ; so that the greater part would be destroyed before the flames could be quenched. Sometimes the poor cattle would suffer, either by being maimed or killed. The gentlemen of the island were under the necessity, therefore, at this season, of forming themselves into an armed body. Their place of rendezvous was the church ; and while a part stood on guard there, the rest formed into parties, and travelled in different circuits, through and round their respective estates. This was done in the night, to prevent mischief, overawe the negroes, and preserve their own lives and property. My

wife's father used to make one of these parties ; and I have heard the inhabitants relate the same things. At Tortola, also, I have heard some of our old Leaders and members, and several of the white inhabitants, say, that it certainly was a happy day when the Methodist Missionaries arrived there ; for, before, many, both of the coloured and white inhabitants, used to dread the approach of Christmas among the slaves ; there was then so much rioting, obeah, (a kind of witchcraft,) cruelty, and wickedness. All old grudges were sure to be remembered and repaid then ; and very often murder was committed. They have told me, it has been thought well if one murder only was committed at that season. Thefts and robberies were innumerable.

Now, these are plain and undeniable facts, visible to all ranks and colours, to friends and enemies. But how very different is the case now ! No guard is kept in Nevis at all at the Christmas festival ; nor has been kept for a great many years. The ungodly spend this season, it is true, in a loose and thoughtless manner ; but even they do not "run to the same excess of riot." A very great and manifest alteration has taken place in general ; but there are hundreds and thousands of the religious slaves who observe Christmas, not only with order and sobriety, but in the most religious manner.

There is no Missionary, with whom the Committee has had any correspondence on this subject, who does not unequivocally deny that any member of their religious society was ever engaged in any conspiracy whatever ; and as the instances just given to prove their good conduct are specific, let those who calumniate them make their inquiries in the islands referred to. It is not necessary to show that the insurrection in Barbadoes was wholly unconnected with Missionary influence. The Moravians have had small success there, and the Methodists still less ; and it has already been publicly stated, that no Methodist Missionary was on the island at the time, nor had been for seventeen months, except one who had touched there on his voyage to another island ; and that the Methodist society on that island amounts to no more than forty-four black and coloured people. Had any of this small band been concerned in the insurrection, it would not to this time have remained a secret. If, then, the preaching of the Methodists has been public in the principal towns to people of all colours, to friends and enemies ; and if, notwithstanding all which the

latter, tortured with jealousy and suspicion, and starting at every shadow, have said of nocturnal meetings and private assemblies, not an instance can be brought forward of the religious slaves having engaged in conspiracies, or discovered any hostility to their masters, but that in many places they have been entrusted with arms, and sometimes to the exclusion of other slaves ; then is it impossible that the Methodist Missionaries should have preached doctrines which endanger the security of the white inhabitants, by exciting the negroes to disaffection and revolt.

But the case is much stronger on the plantations. Over these the owner or his agent exercises as absolute a control as over his dwelling-house ; nor could any meetings be frequently held in them, but with the knowledge and consent of the proprietors. Every one who knows the regulations of a West India plantation must know this. That doctrines tending to promote insubordination should have been preached on so many estates, and for so many years, with the knowledge and consent of the proprietors, may not exceed Mr. Marryat's belief, but certainly surpasses that of any ordinary man. Every planter or manager, throughout the British colonies, who has allowed the visits of Missionaries, (for they have in no instance visited plantations to instruct the negroes without previously obtaining consent,) may be therefore adduced in contradiction of the aspersions of the anti-Mission party, and as bearing, by this encouragement, the strongest testimony in favour of the blameless lives and beneficial labours of the Wesleyan Missionaries. In most cases, on their visits to estates, they are received into the planters' houses, and treated with great hospitality and kindness. Their place of worship, in the first instance, has often been the hall of the master ; afterwards the planters have fitted up places in the works for the purpose ; in some instances, built chapels on the estates ; and in many contributed handsomely to their erection in the neighbourhood. Here, then, is a great body of gentlemen, in different islands, whom the opposers of Missions must themselves allow to be persons of respectability and consequence in West Indian society, who, by their leave and sanction, by

providing places for their slaves to meet in, and by their contributions to the erection of chapels, and other donations to the Missionary cause, have given, for many years, and do still give, their unequivocal denial to the charges of Mr. Marryat and others. Where is the plantation, from which the Missionaries have been expelled for preaching dangerous doctrines? And where is the island where opulent whites have not afforded large pecuniary assistance to the Mission? So extensive a Missionary establishment as the Wesleyan Mission to the West India colonies, employing, as it has been stated, thirty-nine Missionaries, could not have been wholly supported by the Mission fund at home, almost always greatly embarrassed, and pledged to the support and extension of important Missions in other parts. A great part of the money expended by the West India Mission has, by necessity, therefore, been raised in the colonies, of which a considerable sum has been contributed by the whites. There is scarcely a chapel of any magnitude, in any of the islands, in the erection of which the gentlemen of the islands have not assisted by their subscriptions, or otherwise. They have given money; lent money, in considerable sums, till it could conveniently be repaid; made presents of timber, or furnished it on long credit; and lent their negro carpenters and masons *gratis*. Subscriptions of ten, twenty, fifty, and one hundred pounds, for such purposes, mark both the rank in life and the opinions of the contributors. Even in Jamaica, where the dark and dangerous fanaticism of the Methodist has been discovered with more sagacity than in other places, this assistance has been afforded. The Clergy, though not in general personally active in negro instruction, have given proofs that they are not opposed to the efforts made for that purpose, and that they apprehend no danger from them. It has not been an unusual thing for their slaves to be members of the Methodist societies, by their wish or consent. The Rector of Kingston gave £10. 13s. 4d. currency, towards the chapel in that city; and on another occasion £20 towards the Morant-Bay chapel. The Rector of Morant-Bay also gave £10 towards the chapel in that place; and when a collection was made in the chapel at

Kingston, a little before the persecuting law of 1807, for the purpose of affording aid to the building of Morant-Bay chapel, many respectable ladies and gentlemen of the city were present, who put into the box, some joes, and others doubloons, making in the whole a collection of £74. In other islands, not merely planters and merchants, but members of Colonial Assemblies, Presidents, Chief Judges, and Governors, have not only subscribed to the erection of chapels, but in some instances have paid regular stipends to the Missionaries, as a remuneration for their labours in instructing their slaves,* and

* The subjoined extract from the Jamaica Royal Gazette, October 5th, 1816, affords a proof that there are colonists in that island who entertain opinions, as to Methodist Missionaries, very different from those so often expressed in the legislative acts and official papers of that colony :—

“ On Wednesday last the Magistrates and Vestry of St. Thomas in the East agreed to the following resolution : ‘ That the acting Churchwarden pay to Mrs. Burgar, widow of the late Rev. John Burgar, the sum of £100 sterling, as a testimony of the sense they entertain of the propriety of the said Mr. Burgar’s conduct, during the time he had charge of the congregation of Wesleyan Methodists at Morant-Bay.’ ”

The following is a copy of an original document, in which the undersigned planters of Nevis engage to pay certain sums annually to the Missionaries stationed on that island, amounting to £56. 12s., for the instruction of their negroes. Another planter on the same island for many years subscribed £20 a year to the support of the Missionaries, in consideration of the services rendered his negroes.

“ THE VOLUNTARY DONATION OF THE GENTLEMEN PLANTERS, FOR ENCOURAGING THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY AMONGST THEIR SLAVES IN THE ISLAND AFORESAID.

“ WHEREAS the Preachers of the people called Methodists have for several years past visited our estates, and the estates we are Attorneys for, in the island of Nevis, for the benevolent purpose of instructing our negro slaves in the principles of the Christian religion, and thereby endeavouring to produce a reformation in their principles and lives ; and being convinced of the necessity of such reformation, and having reason to believe the said Preachers are desirous to accomplish the same, as is manifested by their constant labours for the above purposes :

“ We, therefore, the undersigned, cheerfully and voluntarily come forward in so good a cause, earnestly wishing that the same may be further extended, and do agree to pay yearly, from the date hereof, unto the said Preacher or Preachers, for the time being, the respective sums annexed to our names in cash, or an equivalent sum in produce, on condition that the said Preacher or Preachers for the time being shall attend, and perform divine service on our

in many instances have done what was of more essential service, have counteracted the designs of "wicked and unreasonable men," who attempted to stir up persecutions, for which no pretence but intolerance or misinformation could be set up. The names of these gentlemen cannot, perhaps, with propriety be given, because, without their previous consent, it would be too great a liberty to use them publicly ; but if Mr. Marryat, or any of his friends, wish for such references, to ascertain the correctness of this statement, the managing Committee of the Missions will not hesitate to furnish them. The exhibition of the facts is sufficient to prove the proposition, that the duration, extent, and circumstances of the Mission being considered, it is impossible for the charges made by its enemies to be true ; it is not possible that the Missionaries should have preached dangerous doctrines, and been suffered to remain on the islands. Enemies in sufficient number they have had ; and through the providence of God, they have had friends too, and of such a character, as to render their protection, and their testimonies in their favour, of sufficient weight, in most instances, to frustrate the purposes of the advocates of negro neglect and ignorance.

The last objection it seems necessary to notice, is the danger of teaching the slaves a form of Christianity different from that professed by their masters. "The negro," says a Scotch writer, "cannot believe that he and his master can be both right while they obey different guides. The true Christianity, therefore, which is the religion of his master, and that of the Government of his country, is the religion he must be taught, if he is to remain submissive and obedient. Any other, accord-

estates specified, and those we are Attorneys for, once a fortnight at least, or oftener, as shall seem meet or convenient to themselves."

"In 1811," says Mr. Dixon, "I was sent to St. Eustatius, and met with great success in the midst of great opposition. I was summoned several times to appear before the Governor and Council, on account of various rumours spread abroad against the doctrines of the Methodists. But nothing was done against me. At length, after various examinations, we obtained a complete triumph, and received the full sanction of the colonial Government. In 1812, a petition was sent from many respectable gentlemen there, to the District Meeting of the Missionaries, requesting the Mission to be continued."

ing to his judgment, raises a barrier between his feelings and his obedience, which must increase in strength and danger." And again : " It will not do to teach a negro a religious creed which tells him that the creed which is believed and followed by his master and the constituted authorities of the country is leading them to destruction."* So likewise the Colonial Journal contends that the Church of England alone, and not the Missionary Preacher is, " the regular, safe, and effectual channel for promoting Christian knowledge." What, then, is the fair inference from this doctrine, but that the Methodist Missionaries ought to be suppressed, their chapels shut up, and their societies, comprehending a large body of instructed and religious negroes, dispersed ? But the inference does not stop here : If such dangers really arise from the introduction of different forms of Christianity, then the Moravian, Baptist, and Independent Missionaries must share the same fate ; and not only they, but in those islands where Roman Catholic doctrines prevail, the Priests of that communion must be expelled also ; and thus, by a new Act of Uniformity, framed at the recommendation of this party, every Minister shall be silenced who will not only not conform, (for that alternative is not to be allowed,) but who is not actually a Clergyman of the Church of England.

This is too extravagant to deserve a reply ; and it would not have been noticed but that the writers of this party appear to think it sanctioned by Lord Holland, who, in his speech in the House of Lords, June 27, in recommending the diffusion of religious knowledge among the negroes by the Church of England, argued, that " it would be important that the masters should assist in procuring this desirable object, and that religious instruction should be according to that system which the masters themselves profess, because the negro thinks that a religion different from that of his master is a species of inferior article, made for that purpose, and therefore proposed to him, whilst his master is possessed of a better." On this point we are, however, persuaded, that the anti-Mission party has

* " Edinburgh Review and the West Indies."

given his Lordship's words a meaning he never intended them to bear, and that they have too confidently presumed when they have pleaded his authority. It did Lord Holland great credit to call the House to this important subject, and to state explicitly the ignorance and neglected state of the negroes, notwithstanding the pretended means of instruction professedly provided for them by the Legislature of Jamaica. But his Lordship's words could not have the meaning they have assigned them : His call was upon the Church of England to exert itself in the work of negro instruction,—a call which we sincerely hope will be answered ; and his argument, that as the religion professed by the master would have most sanction, the Missionaries of the Church would enjoy a greater advantage than any other. So far, therefore, as his Lordship intended to excite the exertions of the Clergy, by reminding them both of the necessity of the case, and of the peculiar advantages they enjoy as Missionaries, the Missionaries of other bodies have no reason to complain, nor their enemies any cause to triumph. Beyond this his Lordship's words do not seem capable of bearing a fair construction ; but if any would press them forward to signify that Missionaries not of the Church of England ought to be suppressed, we would then again ask, For what reason ? If, as it has been stated, and can be sufficiently proved, that their labours have accomplished the very ends Lord Holland proposes by the instruction of slaves by Missionaries of the Church of England,—“ their being taught to respect an oath, and a proper regard for the institution of marriage,”—why are they to be silenced or restricted ? If, in addition to this, the minds of the negroes have been enlightened in the Christian faith, their morals corrected, and they themselves made sober, diligent, and faithful ; if the efforts of the instruments already employed in that work have also improved their civil happiness, by lessening their faults and their punishments, improving their habits, their health, and the cleanliness and comfort of their habitations, &c. ; * and

* “I was one morning riding into St. John's, Antigua, when a gentleman addressed me in these words : ‘Mr. Warrener, I suppose you have been preaching on some of the estates to the negroes.’ I told him I had been

if, with all this good, no evil consequence of any kind has ensued, all which may be easily proved, both from the testimony of Missionaries and others, it is not possible that any man can plead for their suppression who sincerely wishes the success of any Mission conducted by any religious body whatever; and we do suspect that those who would give this interpretation to Lord Holland's speech neither wish that success ardently nor sincerely. Were this scheme of silencing all but

preaching on a certain estate. He replied, 'We planters are much obliged to you, Mr. Baxter, and the Moravians.' I asked him if he thought so in reality. He said, 'Had you been here twenty years ago, and witnessed the severe castigations which were necessarily inflicted on the slaves to restrain their vicious habits, you would not have doubted my sincerity in what I have now spoken. Our negroes are now twenty times better servants, and consequently need not one-twentieth part of their former punishment.' We had abundant testimonies of the change wrought in negroes for the better by the preaching of the Gospel."—**MR. WARRENER.**

"The religious slaves are more decent in their families and manners; the change, indeed, is so great, that nothing could have effected it but the power of God. Their faults are lessened, and, with them, in most cases, their punishments."—**MR. PATTISON.**

"Christian instruction has comforted the minds of multitudes, and made them live peaceably with each other; the effect may be discovered in the neatness of their habitations: But the bettering of their outward circumstances depends much upon the owner."—**MR. FISH.**

"The religious slaves build good huts, obtain decent furniture and beds; they are more cleanly; not laying out their money in rum; they do not destroy their health; and take regular meals: The men do not indulge in fornication and adultery; the women become chaste, instructing their children, exceeding thousands in Europe; when pregnant they do not seek abortion, so common among others."—**MR. GILGRASS.**

"Religion teaches them industry and economy: I have known hundreds of slaves, when brought under its influence, save a few pounds to keep by them, and several have saved money to purchase their freedom. One in Barbadoes bought his freedom twice: His owner took his money the first time, and claimed it as his property, being his slave; the second time he paid it to his friend, who bought his freedom. Another bought her freedom, and is now worth some hundreds of pounds; but, before she enjoyed religion, was a poor slave: And there are thousands in the islands who can declare, 'Godliness is profitable for all things.'"—**MR. BRADNACK.**

"The punishment of the slaves is lessened; they do not run away from the estate; they cultivate their little parcel of ground, procure decent clothes, and live as comfortably as the generality of poor families do in England."—**MR. BROWNELL.**

Missionaries of the Establishment to be carried into effect, or of so restricting them as to deprive their office of its efficiency, who is to remunerate the several religious societies and their friends for the sums they have expended in the erection of places of worship, to afford instruction to those who, before Missionary exertions were employed in their favour, had neither churches nor Pastors ? Suppose the societies raised up by Missionaries dispersed, into what fold are they to be collected ? Where are the Ministers who are to take charge of them, and prevent their relapse into pagan darkness and barbarity ? They are yet, it seems, to be provided ; and if, as the Archbishop of Canterbury stated in the debate we have referred to, "from the manner in which the Missionaries have been received, or some other causes, they had found a very considerable difficulty in procuring fit persons for that duty, in what manner are the places of near sixty Missionaries of different denominations, the Catholics * excluded, (who are to have special favour shown them,) to be filled up, so as to afford even means of instruction to the negroes equal to those they now enjoy ? Lord Holland, we are persuaded, intended to recommend no such measures of destruction ; and the slightest reflection is sufficient to justify the conclusion, that those who advocate them intend less to compliment the Church of England, than to destroy the work already wrought by Missionaries. Far better is it for the slaves to have the "inferior article" of religion offered them by the Missionaries, if indeed it be inferior, than nothing at all ; and more especially as even

* It is a singular instance of the inconsistency of the opposers of Missions that, whilst they argue the danger arising from the toleration of Methodist Missionaries, on the ground of their teaching the slaves a religion different from that of their masters, and that the creed of the latter is leading them to destruction, they should plead for the undisturbed exertions of Catholic Priests, who unquestionably hold the impossibility of salvation out of their own Church. The argument against Methodist Missionaries on this point has certainly no force, because they believe and teach that every righteous man will be saved, whatever may be his profession ; and if there be any force in Lord Holland's argument, which we do not allow, it applies less to the Methodist Missionaries than any others, because the doctrines they teach are the doctrines of the Church of England, whether believed by the owners of slaves or not, and they are in the constant use of the Liturgical forms of that Church.

that "inferior article" has taught them to "live righteously, soberly, and godly," affording them light and support in life, and comforting them in worn-out age, and in the hour of death. If, however, "the Society for the Conversion of the Negroes in the British West India Islands" can find any considerable number of Clergymen to engage in promoting the objects of the Society, there is no want of room for their exertions; it is not necessary to destroy the labour of others in order to commence their own, while two-thirds of the black population are without the "knowledge of a Deity and the Christian faith." Plans to instruct and convert them may and, it is hoped, will be formed; but it is exceedingly doubtful whether the anti-Mission party have been so far shamed, by public discussion, into a regard for the spiritual interests of the slaves, as cordially to co-operate in promoting them, even through the agency of the Church of England, unless they can so far influence the arrangement that it shall, in its operation, more impede the labours of other Missionaries than promote the instruction of the neglected part of the blacks.*

* These observations apply exclusively to that party who, both at home and in the colonies, have discovered an equal hostility to Missions and to their object. Unhappily they are in the greatest activity, and have pushed themselves forward as the representatives of the opinions and fears of the colonists at large. It is, however, hoped that those of the colonists who rightly estimate the importance of communicating Christianity to their slaves are increasing in number, and exerting a stronger influence: The slightest indication of this must be gladdening to the heart of every one who feels an interest in the happiness of man; and though the proceedings of the House of Assembly in Jamaica have, on this subject, so often "held the word of promise to the ear, and broken it to the hope," the earnest wish for the moral improvement of the negro naturally disposes the friends of religion to expect that the new pledge which the Assembly has just given, to take into consideration the best means of "promoting genuine Christianity" among the slaves, will be redeemed. It may not, however, be out of place here to remark, that the comments afforded by the former language and proceedings of the Jamaica House of Assembly on the phrase "genuine Christianity," explain it to signify, that the doctrines of the Missionaries greatly differ from their own views of Christian doctrine, and that they are not teachers of genuine Christianity. What the particular views of the members of the House of Assembly are on religious subjects, it is not possible, in the case of every individual, to determine; but as, collectively, they profess to adopt those of the national Church, it may be observed, that if the doctrines of the Church of

They are anxious, not that the slaves should be instructed, but that Missionaries should not instruct them ; and, provided they be suppressed, they are regardless of the moral consequences to the negro population. Such is their “tolerant spirit, and their regard to the interests of Christianity,” that, to destroy the Missionary system, they would replunge into barbarism one-third of the black population of the colonies, whose numbers are yearly increasing, who are exerting a powerful correcting influence upon their fellows around them, and diffusing those principles of Christian knowledge and morality through the islands which alone can ensure their permanent safety, and promote their prosperity. But who will join them in this attempt ? Let it be observed, that Mr. Marryat and other writers in this country are the agents of a party, which, if a powerful one in a few islands, is still but a party ; and, as far as Missions are concerned, far from a powerful one in others. They may persuade the Legislatures of Jamaica, St. Vincent, and Barbadoes to adopt restrictive laws against Methodist Missionaries, and may attempt, by false or exaggerated statements, to convince the British public of their necessity ; but even in St. Vincent’s those Missionaries will find many powerful friends ; and the Legislatures of other islands, as they have never followed the example of persecution set them in Jamaica, are not now likely to do it. These exceptions would still stand as permanent refutations of the charges which are made to justify the persecuting laws of other islands, should they even adopt them, and prove to the world that they originated neither in policy nor in necessity, but

England be “genuine Christianity,” then are those taught by the Wesleyan Missionaries “genuine Christianity,” inasmuch as they preach the doctrines embodied in the Articles and Liturgy of that Church, and none which are opposed to them. And this would be found the case, were the members of the House of Assembly to imitate the example of the planters of Nevis, and hear for themselves. It remains, however, to be disclosed whether the former conduct of that House will be repeated,—to make a show of providing more effectually for the instruction of the slaves, and, as a necessary part of this plan, impose restrictions upon the exertions of the agents now employed in it,—or whether they will suffer those already engaged in teaching “genuine Christianity” to prosecute their work, and provide for the thousands who are, in their own terms, still “ignorant of a Deity and the Christian faith.”

were the sole and exclusive results of religious animosity, and other causes still less honourable.

VIII.—CAUSES OF OPPOSITION TO THE METHODIST MISSIONARIES IN SOME PARTS OF THE WEST INDIES.

THIS section shall be brief, as the object of this work is not to assail, but to defend. Whatever these causes may be, enough has been said to show that the opposition has not arisen from any proved misconduct on the part of the Missionaries ; nor from any mischievous effects of their preaching on the mind of the negro. The Missionaries have never obtruded themselves into scenes of labour occupied by others ; and they have uniformly solicited permission, or been invited, before they have preached on estates : They have not, therefore, gone out of their direct path to oppose the prejudices of any of the colonists ; though they, in a very gratuitous manner, uncalled for by any necessity, have been, in many instances, opposed and persecuted by them. Much of this opposition may be resolved into vicious manners, and the enmity they usually originate to true religion. The standard of morals and religious feeling is not usually kept so high in colonies as in the parent state ; for the same causes are not in operation to produce this effect to the same extent : Equal opportunities of religious worship are not afforded, and the respect for religion declines.* Infidelity, also, greatly prevails in the West

* This may be illustrated in the case of the Scotch in Jamaica, who are remarkable for their respect to public worship at home, by the following anecdote :—

“ The Scotch,” says Mr. Fish, “ who are very numerous in Jamaica, had often pretended, when reproved by one of their pious countrymen for their total neglect of public worship, that if they had a Minister of their own persuasion, they would readily attend. In 1800 the Edinburgh Missionary Society sent out three pious men, the Rev. Mr. Bothuen, a regular Minister, —partly to reclaim their wandering countrymen, and partly to preach to the negroes —with Messrs. Clark and Read as catechists. Scarcely a Scotchman would notice them ; two of the Missionaries died, and the Mission was ulti-

Indies, and that, with all its fair pretences, has ever been found inimical to the interests and best hopes of the human race. The very system of slavery has a deteriorating effect upon the character of the whites: Constantly in contact, and often in contest, with the bad qualities of the uninstructed and vicious negro, his sloth, stupidity, carelessness, fraud, and faithlessness, tend both to call the bad passions of those who are to control and govern him into activity, and to produce that contempt for the whole race which leads them to conclude their reformation impossible, and to treat Missions to negroes with contempt, even where they are not resisted with enmity. To these causes are to be added, prejudices against the education of the lower classes, which, though greatly abated in this country, remain in their full force in the colonies.* "Knowledge," the colonists know, "is power;" but they cannot conceive how this power can be communicated to the blacks without endangering themselves, and from hence arises the objection to negro schools, and to negro instruction by preaching. They live in constant alarm of insurrection and massacre, and too frequently conclude, that nothing but physical force can now, or in future, keep the slaves in subjection, attaching no importance, except a mischievous one, to the operation of those moral causes and habits which more effectually than any other would secure order and establish confidence.† In some islands Missions

mately given up." At home, too, they are, in most instances, honourable exceptions from religious intolerance; but in Jamaica they have been among the most violent opposers of Missions.

* The Methodist Missionaries have established three Sunday-schools in different islands, but they are of recent date, the prejudice against schools being more general and much stronger than against preaching. This point they have, therefore, thought it prudent not to press generally.

† An amusing instance of the proneness of some of the colonists to start at shadows, and of that strangeness of construction which fear and jealousy may put upon the most harmless matter, we are able to furnish from a Jamaica Common Council Minute, containing questions put to Mr. Bradnack, a Methodist Missionary, with his answers:—

In Common Council, December 14th, 1807.

QUESTION 6.—Are you aware of a resolution of the society of Wesleyan Methodists, entered into at the last Annual Conference, to this effect, "That no person shall be permitted to retain any official situation who holds opinions

have been suffered to have a fair trial, and their good effects have produced a general favour towards them ; in others the trial has not been fully permitted, and the prejudice remains. There are many individual exceptions in all ; but in the anti-Mission party some of the causes just mentioned, and, in some cases, all of them, are in full and active operation. Other causes which have produced many instances of individual opposition to the Missions, and which, in some cases, have chiefly promoted acts of legislative oppression, could be adduced ; but we do not seek occasion of crimination, though the causes of opposition we allude to would greatly explain and fix its character. Our forbearance in this respect must, however, be determined by the future conduct of those who appear to be appointed by the anti-Mission party in the colonies to advocate their cause in this country ; and if they should, by their violence and unfounded aspersions, make it necessary to state the true ground of the opposition made in certain instances to the introduction and continuance of means of instruction among the negroes and people of colour, they will gain little from the pretences that good policy renders such measures as they propose to adopt necessary. If it should appear that the real offence given by Missionaries is their preaching faithfully against certain reigning vices ; that among the number of those “ turned to righteousness ” have been many females who were

contrary to the total depravity of human nature ?” if so, answer whether the term “ official situation ” does not include you as a Preacher ; and what, to the best of your knowledge and belief, is alluded to by the words, “ total depravity of human nature ?”

ANSWER.—Does not know of such a resolution being enacted lately ; but thinks it proper. Supposes the term “ official ” applies to his office among others. Thinks the words “ total depravity ” allude to our fallen nature.

Q. 7.—Do you conscientiously think that the resolution before mentioned purports that no person should hold an official situation who has opinions against the fallen nature of man, as being born in sin, and that it has no allusion whatever to the state of bondage, as it exists in this country, being the total depravity of human nature ?

A.—Answers particularly in the affirmative.

There were, it seems, some subtle Divines in the Common Council in those days, and admirably fitted to judge the doctrines taught by the Missionaries.

the objects of illicit attachment and licentious intercourse ; that the personal ill-treatment which the Preachers of "righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come," have, in many cases, experienced, has been the consequence of violent resentments produced by checks put upon vicious indulgence, by the introduction of a stronger principle of morality among the slaves and females of colour ; and that restrictive laws, gravely proposed to Legislatures, have been, in instances which might be given, mainly the work of men who had such injuries to complain of ;—then the whole controversy would be placed in a light in which that party are not, we are persuaded, disposed to have it viewed. On this subject evidence is not wanting ; but the necessity of adducing it shall be created only by the conduct of those who are most anxious to justify their zeal against Missions on very different reasons.

IX. CONCLUSION.

SHOULD any demand the object of the present publication, the answer is, that the Methodists, who have for many years conducted an extensive Mission to the negro slaves in the West India colonies, which has been supported by their voluntary contributions, and those of the friends of Christianity in general, wish to be understood by the public. They ask no favour from the colonists who oppose them ; but they think they have a claim to protection. The persecuting laws enacted against them at different times by some of the colonial Legislatures, have been uniformly refused the royal sanction at home ; and the most prompt and condescending attention has been paid to their representations by His Majesty's Ministers ; but, in the mean time, their Missionaries have been imprisoned, their chapels shut, and their societies injured.* They, there-

* "The persecution in Jamaica in 1807 obliged us," says Mr. Gilgrass, "to put away five hundred innocent slaves from our society ; for we were liable to a fine of twenty pounds for each negro we instructed, and they to punishment for attending. The chapels and meeting-houses were shut, while I and

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fore, think themselves called upon, in justice to themselves, thus publicly to meet the attacks, and disprove the statements, of writers and speakers whose object is to revive such hostilities in the West Indies, by pretending their policy and necessity ; and which, though they would be again disallowed by a tolerant Government, are nevertheless, in their intermediary operation, greatly injurious and severe.

They protest, too, against their Missions being mixed up with the discussions on the Registry Bill. The Methodist Missions are purely religious ; their Missionaries have no civil objects, nor do they actually engage in them : Plans for the amelioration of the civil condition of the negroes, and for communicating to them civil rights, stand on distinct grounds, and are conducted by other agents. The Wesleyan Missionaries are not, and will never be suffered to become, political partisans : If they have been considered such, the mistake is hereby corrected. As men they will have their opinions for or against such measures as may affect the condition of society in the islands in which they labour ; but as Missionaries they are required to confine their whole attention to one object,—the religious improvement of the negroes ; and so far from the insinuation having any foundation in truth, that they are the advocates of instantaneous emancipation, and encourage insurrection to effect it, there is sufficient reason to assert, that there is not one of them who does not most fully believe, that a speedy emancipation of the slaves would be as injurious to the slave himself as dangerous to the colonies. Those who advocate that philanthropic measure, the Registry Bill, and propose other plans in favour of the colonial slave, have no need of their agency, and they have it not.

It has been said, in favour of the instruction of the negroes by the Clergy exclusively, that “ every Minister of the estab-

my wife were in the common gaol, Kingston ; and when I came out, and began preaching on the restricted plan, I was obliged to appoint six door-keepers to prevent the slaves from entering the chapel, and violating the law. They would, however, come in their leisure time, and stand on the outside. ‘ They would not,’ to use their own words, ‘ make Massa again to go to gaol. Me no go in a chapel, but me hear at door and window.’ We beheld them, and wept ; but could say nothing.”

lished Church is a known acknowledged character; and that his principles and qualifications are either known, or may be known, by the Bishop within whose jurisdiction the West India islands lie.”* This is acknowledged, though we have seen how little this circumstance favoured the excellent Missionaries sent out by Bishop Porteus; but, on the other side, it may also be said, that the “principles and qualifications” of every Methodist, Moravian, Baptist, and other Missionary in the colonies “are or may be known” by the Societies at home, who send them out, and who, when there, exercise superintendence over them. There are no Missionaries in the West Indies, as far as we know, who are insulated from this kind of superintendence and control; they all belong to Societies who have known and official Committees, Directors, &c., at home, and chiefly in the metropolis: This circumstance is a sufficient answer to the above argument for the exclusive instruction of the negroes by the Clergy, could a sufficient number be found. These Committees, or by whatever name those bodies are called, to whom the management of the Missions of different religious denominations is submitted, comprising, in every instance, some men of great respectability, and well known in the world, are responsible to the public for the general good conduct of the Missionaries they employ, and are a sufficient pledge that none will be employed or continued whose conduct shall give just cause of offence to individuals, or to the local authorities of the islands. In the case, therefore, of the Methodist Missionaries, were the colonial Governments, most jealous of their efforts, disposed to pursue a frank and liberal conduct, they have it in their power to secure all the benefits of Missionary zeal, and to guard sufficiently against any supposed evils arising out of the imprudence or misconduct of individuals. No such dangerous proceedings, indeed, as have been alleged, have in reality taken place, or the Managing Committee of the Methodist Missions must have been acquainted with them: But if any Missionary should so conduct himself as to endanger, even by mere imprudence, the precarious peace of society

there, there is a Superintendent of the Methodist Missions in every island, who is in regular correspondence with the Committee, to whom any complaints might be addressed ; or they might be made to the Committee itself, who may be known from the Minutes of the Annual Conference, as easily procurable in the islands as in England, and which are actually, and we believe regularly, procured by those who watch the Mission with jealousy, to search for any new regulations they may contain which may affect the islands and be dangerous to their interests. This would be much more to the credit of such Legislatures, than to institute restrictive acts on hearsay evidence and false and general rumours : It would be more creditable to them than to resort to measures of general and irrespective oppression, were individual cases of improper conduct actually to take place ; for such cases would be promptly examined, and the evil rectified. That this has not been done, shows, in conjunction with many other circumstances, that there are Legislatures who have been hostile to Missionaries merely as such, and without inquiring whether their conduct has been right or wrong, and the consequences of their zeal good or evil. Had they been alarmed only lest the Missionaries should excite sedition, in the preventive acts they have adopted, the crime made punishable would have been seditious expressions : But it speaks decisively as to the real intention of those legislative proceedings, that they have uniformly gone beyond even the alleged danger of the case ; and that the crime they have created has not been seditious preaching, but preaching of every description.

It is pretended by the Colonial Journal, the periodical organ of the anti-Mission party, that persecution is not their object ; but that, as, in the mother country, no Dissenting Teacher is allowed to act as a Minister of religion, unless he first qualify himself by taking the oaths prescribed by the laws, the colonial Legislatures have also the right to prevent any persons from teaching in the West Indies, unless first licensed according to the forms, and under the conditions, they may think necessary ; and this, it is asserted, is not intolerance, but a measure of prudence. Before this principle be admitted, its

consequences ought to be well weighed. We believe that no charter granted to any of the islands allows of their making any laws, except such as are to be considered in the light of bye laws, not in opposition to those fundamental principles of legislation which have obtained in the parent state. If any laws, at all restrictive of the principles of the constitution, be rendered necessary from the peculiar structure of West Indian society, where a great part of the population is held in a state of bondage, and deprived of all civil rights, they are to be enacted, not by the colonial Legislatures, but by the British Parliament, or, at least, under its control. Till such an Act, therefore, passes the parent Legislature, which shall limit the laws for the freedom and protection of religious worship to the mother country alone, or which shall give liberty to the West India colonies to adopt, modify, or reject its laws relative to religion, at pleasure, we must deny the right of any of the West India insular Legislatures to enact, in the form of an internal regulation, any laws more narrow in their operation than those of Great Britain, respecting religious freedom ; and as far as British subjects are concerned, must also maintain that the "Toleration Laws travel with the British flag" into all the dependencies of the British crown ; and that every British subject, in every place, has the right guaranteed to him to profess and communicate his opinions on religious subjects on the same terms as in Great Britain, so long as no Act of the British Parliament expressly excepts the place where he may reside out of the operation of the toleration it allows at home, or alters the conditions and limitations of the rights it has recognised. If this be denied in a question of religion, then it must be denied in every question of civil liberty also ; and the benefits of the British constitution are not, in that case, secured to British subjects abroad, by virtue of that constitution, as existing in laws enacted, or principles recognised, by the Legislature at home ; nor can any resident in the colonies be assured of the enjoyment of his civil rights, except the Acts of the British Parliament be re-enacted by the colonial Legislatures ; which right of re-enactment would of course involve the right of rejection or limitation. Will

those, then, who contend for the right of colonial Legislatures to make religious freedom the subject of their bye laws and internal regulations, be content to leave all their civil rights on the same unsettled ground ? We believe not ; but the case of religious and of civil rights must stand or fall together. If a bye law can be turned against toleration, it may annihilate the trial by jury, or any other palladium of personal freedom and security. If the religious freedom secured to British subjects by the constitution be in reality dangerous to the islands, the remedy for the evil is not to be sought from the Local Governments, but only from the Parliament of Great Britain, before which the necessity of interference must be proved. If any person abuses his liberty to endanger the welfare of society, there are laws for his restraint and punishment, which, in like manner, extend both to the parent state and its dependencies.

But if the principle itself were conceded, the strongest objections would lie against the re-qualification of Missionaries in the colonial courts, unless it were made imperative upon such courts to license them by express and explicit enactments, where no sufficient cause could be shown for refusal. Even then, no inconsiderable difficulty would remain. The alarms which any attempt to instruct the slaves, however prudent, excites in certain of the colonists, would ever be fruitful in discovering "sufficient causes" for refusing licences, or silencing those who had obtained them. If men can be so easily found, as in the case of Mr. Talboys, to misrepresent, and give a mischievous interpretation to, the sermons of Missionaries, whom they occasionally go to hear, for the express purpose of fixing on something which, by severe torturing, may be made to confess that of which it was not guilty ; and the mere allegations of such persons, expressed in a petition, shall be received in a court, in preference to the exculpating testimony of respectable persons on oath ; there is an end put, at once, to the security of the Missionaries. If a colonial Common Council, as in a case before given, could find something suspicious in the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature, enjoined upon the belief of the Methodist Missionaries, in

common with their brethren at home, and no less a doctrine of the established Church than of the Methodists ; and it was even thought proper to extort a solemn abnegation from one of them, that the doctrine in question had no relation whatever to any project for negro emancipation ; what doctrines can the Missionaries preach, which, by this extravagant absurdity of interpretation, may not be deemed a “ sufficient cause ” for withholding permission to exercise their functions, or for recalling it when given ? It is a fact, that there are passages of God’s holy word which some of the Missionaries have not dared to quote in their sermons, lest those captious hearers who sometimes attend their ministry should take occasion, from the terms of them, to represent their sermons as having an inflammatory effect upon the minds of the negroes.* Placed, as they often are, in such delicate circumstances, it is not, certainly, to the colonial courts that the Missionaries ought to be left to look for their warrant to enter upon, or to continue, their ministry.

But if we go farther, and assert that the claim set up by the conductors of the Colonial Journal in behalf of the right of the colonial courts to license the Preachers who may be sent out as Missionaries, before they are allowed to enter upon their labours, is no more than a covered attempt to restrict, and ultimately to destroy, the Mission itself, at least in some of the islands ; we shall be borne out by the fact, that the party opposed to Missions have seldom actually assumed that right in the West Indies, but for the purpose of restricting, and in some cases wholly preventing, the exertions of Missionaries. This power has been chiefly assumed in Jamaica ; and in some parts of that island, and particularly in Kingston, the Missionaries have been harassed for many years. Sometimes the licences have been granted, and sometimes withheld. Some Missionaries have obtained them, others have failed ; though

* “ In the West India towns we have generally some hearers waiting to misconstrue every thing, however innocently advanced. During my stay there I never once used our Lord’s own words, ‘ If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed,’ lest a bad use should be made of them.”

—MR. BRADNACK.

no reason has been given why they were refused ; and the answer has sometimes been, “ The Magistrates are unanimously resolved to grant no more licences.” Such are the discouraging circumstances under which the Mission has been placed in Jamaica ; and such would be the frequent result, if the principle contended for were generally adopted. It would produce in other places the same mockery of all justice, to claim the right of licensing, and then, almost systematically, to refuse licences.

The friends of the moral amelioration of the enslaved African, and of Christianity as the most efficient means of producing that amelioration, so far from having cause to indulge any feeling of resentment towards the numerous writers in opposition to the Registry Bill, who have taken occasion to impugn the operation of Missions, have reason to congratulate themselves, that the controversy is likely to bring the neglected condition of the negro, as to his spiritual concerns, more fully before the public, and to spread out the case in its full extent. The object of Mr. Marryat, and others, as far as Missions are concerned, appears to be twofold ; to excite a general opposition to Missionary labours in the colonies, and, by their writings, to dispose Parliament to sanction some measure, which in an indirect and incidental form they may propose, to obstruct their operation. But no friend to humanity, no advocate of religion, can wish them success in either ; nor, when the consequences of such success shall be developed, will it give Mr. Marryat, who we hope is more misled than wilfully erring, in this case, or any true friend to the colonies, any satisfaction. Already, indeed, is the feverish and anxious state of the whites in the West Indies sufficiently pitiable. To dwell in perpetual alarms ; to be on the watch-tower without any intermission ; to be thrown into disquietude by the most trifling appearances of danger, is a condition not in any degree to be envied. It is a state, too, which affords no hope of amendment, except by those very means which the anti-Mission party, with so great a disregard to their own interests, oppose. The importation of slaves being prohibited, those who are born on the islands, and from infancy accustomed to

European arts and intercourse, will acquire more cunning for the devising of plots, more moral force for carrying them into execution, and greater facilities of combination. The rising people of Hayti may learn to intrigue with their sable brethren in the British colonies; in a future war, some naval power, not very delicate in its choice of means, may promote insurrections of slaves, were it only to involve a colony of the British crown in ruin, without reference to its own advantage. If these and other *ab extra* dangers be imaginary, the constant alarm of the colonists, of itself proves their own sense of internal hazard; and what is the proper inference? Is it wiser merely to postpone the catastrophe as long as possible, by an austere and grinding system, the means which must render it ultimately inevitable, or to prevent it entirely, by kindness and Christian instruction? By what new lights have the party opposed to Missions, schools, and other instructing agencies, which may prepare the lowest of society for civil privileges and social instructions, read either history or human nature? It was an objection made long ago, and before the principles of government were as well understood as they are in the present day,

*Errat longè mea quidem ententia,
Qui imperium credat gravius esse aut stabilius
Vi quod fit, quam illud, quod amicitia adjungitur.*

Ages of experience have given to this sentiment all the force and authority of an axiom. The law of kindness has not nor can ever lose its force, whilst man is man. It has indeed been alleged, that the African slave is incapable of gratitude; but of this we doubt. Gratitude is, in part, one of the instincts of our nature; and, like all other instincts, operates universally, unless counteracted by accidental circumstances. It is an instinct, also, improvable into a moral principle, by the influence of Christianity; and, if the negro slave has been deficient in this virtue, it will be led up in its full vigour in the train of Christian instruction. But, if the anti-Mission party still intend to persevere in the hazardous experiment of ruling over a vicious slave population, secretly

stung with resentment at their degradation and exacted labours, and brooding over hatreds which only want opportunity to mark their malignity in indiscriminate massacre and desolation ; if they will still erect their edifice of power on the brink of a crumbling precipice, and resist all the means by which it may obtain solidity ; at least they ought to consult the opinions and wishes of a numerous class of white proprietors, of more liberal views, and more benevolent feelings. They, we are persuaded, having experienced the benefits of Missionary labours, in the moral improvement of their slaves, and their increased attachment to their persons,* and expressed a strong conviction of their importance in so many unequivocal methods, will not join in the boisterous clamour lately renewed against them, nor be willing to put their persons, property, and other interests to hazard, in an experiment upon a principle which all experience, all morality, and all religion, join to condemn, and which has ever issued in the destruction of them who have made it.

If the object of this party, so zealous in the cause they have espoused, as to put every periodical work and newspaper they can influence into requisition, to convey their charges and insinuations against those who are employed in instructing and Christianizing the slave population of the colonies, be also to influence the British Parliament in favour of some restrictive measure they may intend to propose, this attempt is still bolder than the incitement of the colonists, and implies a very indecent reflection upon a Legislature which of late has been more than usually active in directing its attention to the improvement of the education and morals of the lower classes, and which is not more distinguished for the talents of its members, than for a general and established character of religious liberality. To suppose it even possible for the British Parliament

* “ I have sometimes, for the sake of experiment, asked those negroes who had religious masters, whether, if their masters would give them their freedom, they would not be glad to be free. They have replied, again and again, ‘ Massa, me no better myself ; me ab clothes and food, and Massa let me go to hear de great word for to save my soul ; beside me no want to go free.’ ”
—**MR. BRADNACK.**

to adopt the jealous feelings, the intolerance, and the total disregard to the religious interests of the negro slaves, by which they have distinguished themselves, can only be accounted for by the proneness of men to measure others by their own standard. The presumption, however, cannot be so high, nor the real character of Parliament so little known, as to embolden them to make this attempt directly. We shall doubtless hear again, as formerly, of their anxiety for the instruction of the negroes ; their wish that a better provision may be made for that purpose by the Church of England ; and then, (which is the key to the whole,) of the necessity of discountenancing the efforts of all other Missionary Societies. But with the evidence which has already been presented of the real state of the negroes ; the acknowledged impracticability of providing adequate religious instruction for them, by other means than are now in operation ; the good which has already been effected ; the important moral influence which is in present activity ; and the extensive benefits, both civil and moral, which are every year developing themselves ; the cause of the African may be left, without anxiety, in the hands of the British Parliament, and to the opinion of the British public, notwithstanding the active means of misrepresentation, and the calumnies, which have been employed to bring into discredit Missions of the first order in point of civil importance, and of the greatest magnitude in respect of success. But there are deeper interests involved in them, and which cannot appeal to the heart in vain, whilst our Christianity is any thing more than a name, and our professed respect for religion better than a hollow pretence. Are they considerations of no weight with the public, in an age of generous philanthropy and enlightened zeal for the progress of the truth of God, that for so many years thousands of neglected slaves have been sought out and instructed by Missionaries of different denominations, when none beside cared for them ? that thousands in that period have passed into a happy immortality, having been previously prepared for it by the hallowing influence of religion ? that a system of instruction has been commenced, which, if unchecked in its operation, will prepare an ignorant

and abject class of men to read with advantage those holy Scriptures which it is now the noble ambition of so large and respectable a class of society at home to furnish to every nation under heaven, and which will extend all those blessings through the West Indies which are so justly considered as attached to the preaching of the Gospel, and to the possession of the sacred oracles ? Is it a powerless appeal made to human and religious feeling, that crimes have been diminished among the slaves wherever the influence of the Gospel has been permitted freely to exert itself ; that punishments have been proportionably mitigated ; that the moral standard, however low it may yet be, has been greatly raised in many of the islands ; that so many cheering spectacles of happy and orderly negro families are exhibited ; that the negro hut resounds with the praises of Christ ; and the infant children of Ethiopia, under the care of their converted mothers, are taught to stretch out their hands unto God ?* Such have been the effects, more or less strikingly displayed, wherever the Missionaries have laboured. The wilderness and the solitary place have been glad for them. And is this fair prospect, at once the effect of moral cultivation, and the demonstration of its efficiency, to be broken in upon and trampled down at the call of men, by whose exertions a ray of light was never conveyed into the mind of a slave, nor any of his vices corrected ; who can survey, without a sigh, his mind in ruins, the habitation of those prowling passions which are the objects of their dread, and the instruments of his misery ; content only if he continues to crouch under the whip, and to yield his appointed quantum of labour ; and indignant, not at their own neglect,

* The exemplary attention with which instructed negro mothers communicate the principles of religious knowledge to their children has been before mentioned. The following anecdote will present a lively contrast between Christian and pagan instruction. "A female negro," says Mr. Bradnack, "once said to me, 'My mother tell her child, When any body strike her, you strike them again ; when they curse her, curse them again. She never knew better, till she came to hear the great word.' " Is it by such precepts inculcated in earliest infancy, or by the Christian injunction, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you," that the security of West Indian society is the more likely to be promoted ?

and his vices, but at the men who have expended health and life in his cause and in theirs ? A work of so much mercy cannot be placed under the protection of the public sentiment of the people of this country in vain ; nor will the Parliament of Great Britain allow undertakings so dear to humanity and piety to be obstructed by calumny and clamour. The appeal which, when the bodily wrongs only of the sons of Africa were in question, roused every feeling of humane interest in the Parliament and people of Great Britain, will not be less powerful, when connected with the immortal interests of the mind, and the solemnities of eternity. “ Am I not a man and a brother ? ”

In fine, Mr. Marryat, and the anti-Mission party, whether at home or in the colonies, may be assured, that, as far as the Methodist Missionaries are concerned, they are not to be deterred by calumnies, nor even menaces, from the prosecution of their work. Conscious of the pureness of their motives, encouraged by success, secure of the countenance of candid men, even in the islands, they will relinquish no station, nor hesitate to embrace every new opportunity which may present itself, for instructing and reforming the ignorant and neglected objects of their Mission. In the work they have undertaken, they have endured contempt, and can still endure it ; they have suffered bonds, and can again suffer them, should Mr. Marryat and his coadjutors succeed in exciting new persecutions. They have more than once lived down old calumnies, and they will live and act down new ones. Satisfied if they make full proof of their ministry before God and unprejudiced men, and be able to present, as their best epistles of recommendation, thousands of once pagan Africans, living under every kind of vicious habit, now enlightened in the great principles of Christian doctrine, and adorning it in the morality of their lives, and the meekness of their spirits. The aspersions with which they have been assailed have never produced in their minds a consciousness of disgrace, nor will they now produce it. There are calumnies without point, and reproaches without shame ; there is a cause which converts censure into praise, and brightens obloquy into glory.

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER the last sheet of this pamphlet was printed off, and a part of the impression put into circulation, the author obtained Mr. Marryat's "Examination of the Report of the Berbice Commissioners," &c. With the substance of that work, and its general purpose, the conductors of the Methodist Missions have no concern; but Mr. Marryat has taken occasion to make another assault upon the Methodist Missionaries, towards the close of his book, and wholly to outdo his former doings in gross and illiberal calumny. His observations might demand a longer reply, were they not substantially confuted in the foregoing pages: The process of refutation shall not here, therefore, be tedious. Mr. Marryat contends, that the negroes in Grenada, of the Roman Catholic persuasion, ought not to be converted to Methodism. Be it so: As far as the Methodist Missionaries are concerned, they have no specific instructions to endeavour the conversion of Catholic negroes in Grenada, or in any other island; their designation being to the uninstructed and neglected negroes. For what cause, then, did Mr. Marryat go out of his way, to institute a comparison between the Roman Catholic religion, and that of the Methodists, as to its political tendency? Evidently to attach to the Methodists a slander which he either knew, or might have known, to be false. "The Roman Catholic religion may be considered as the aristocratical, and the Methodist as the democratical, religion. The Priests of the former preach passive obedience and non-resistance, principles extremely well calculated to secure good order and subordination. The Missionaries of the Methodists inculcate liberty and equality; and the religious doctrine, that all men are equal in the sight of God, is very liable, with the ignorant, to a political misinterpretation." Mr. Marryat has endeavoured to mystify this

passage, by confounding religious equality with political equality. The Methodists, he says, consider all men, religiously, equal in the sight of God. They do ; this is allowed without reluctance ; and so do Christians of every name ; so do the Roman Catholics. We would not join Mr. Marryat in so foul a slander against them, as to mingle this with their numerous corruptions of religion. There never was a body of men, bearing the name of Christians, in any age, who have dared to be guilty of the effrontery of the attempt to rob the poor of any country, or the slaves of any master, of their share in the common patrimony of religion ; and to invade a principle of the religion of Christ, which is at once one of its distinguishing glories, and one of its best evidences of divinity, that “ in Christ Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” This bold attempt to introduce caste into the benevolent and undistinguishing religion of the Son of God was reserved for Mr. Marryat ; and if he represents the opinions of any of the colonists, for them also ; and both may be left in the enjoyment of all the satisfaction it can afford. “ But this principle is very liable to political misrepresentation.” Are the slaves, then, to be taught that men are unequal in the sight of God ? If Mr. Marryat is assured that the Roman Catholics will teach this doctrine, and that no Missionary can be safely tolerated who does not preach it, the proper course for him to pursue is, to move, in his place in the House of Commons, for leave to bring in a Bill, to confine the religious instruction of the slaves solely to the Catholics.

If, when Mr. Marryat asserts, that the Methodist Missionaries “ inculcate liberty and equality,” he only infers this from their opinion that all men are “ religiously equal in the sight of God,” were he a man of febler talents, we might refer the inference to a pitiable infirmity of mind ; but he cannot plead this kind of exculpation. Taking the terms in their common and popular sense,—and there is no reason to suppose that they are used in any other,—it is a calumny, and one which might be marked with a strong epithet, were we not disposed to treat Mr. Marryat with greater respect than he has shown for himself. Neither at home nor abroad have Methodist

Ministers inculcated such doctrines ; but have uniformly resisted them ; and their attachment to the constitution of their country, their conscientious submission to, and reverence for, civil government, are too well known to need any additional testimony from the writer, or to be tarnished by the charges of Mr. Marryat, who could never have made them, had he not given his readers as much credit for their ignorance of the Methodists, as he has discovered himself.

By what code of morals Mr. Marryat regulates himself, when he can deliberately hold up a whole body of people as enemies to the constitution and government under which they live, without the least evidence adduced or pretended, and that, too, in an unquiet and turbulent season, when both the common and colonial Governments are awake to every symptom of danger, and the former is perhaps about to arm itself with new powers against suspected persons, we shall not determine. His views on morals are not, however, such as will render him an authority in matters of religion ; and his description of the religious system of the Methodists may therefore pass with one remark, sufficiently refuting, that it is Mr. Marryat's description, the materials of which he might possibly procure from his favourite witnesses, to whom he again refers in his new pamphlet, Messrs. Bryer and Horne, and Miss Natty Mackenzie.

But the secret will come out. Mr. Marryat confesses, that of the effects of the Methodist religion he has “seen but little ;” and he tacitly acknowledges his having no evidence to support his censures, by his being driven to pervert a passage from a letter of a Missionary, who is not a Methodist, to countenance them. If, however, Mr. Marryat knows so little of the subject he writes upon, how is it that he speaks so confidently ? The case comes to this : He knows little, and yet he writes much ; he has no facts, no evidence, yet he pronounces with as high a tone as though the whole subject were before him ! What kind of authority, then, is Mr. Marryat ? What kind of man is he ? Solomon has taught us how to characterize the man who speaks much, and knows little ; but he has not assisted us to classify him who speaks much, and

at the same time confesses how little he knows. The fault in such a case is not in the head ; it lies deeper ; and such a person strips himself, not only of all that is respectable in an author, but of pretension itself. He is not only above the qualities of knowledge and candour, but above the shame of wanting them.

The whole of what Mr. Marryat has said, in the work before us, on the subject of Methodist Missions, is, by his own confession, brought to this result. The dangers he contemplates from their labours rest, not on his knowledge or observation, but on a subtle course of reasoning, from the principle held by them, in common with all Christians, "the religious doctrine, that all men are equal in the sight of God." We will bring out this logical excursion of his mind at full length. The Methodists hold, that all men are religiously equal in the sight of God ; therefore they preach this doctrine frequently ; therefore they inculcate political liberty and equality ; and therefore they preach doctrines dangerous to the peace of society in the colonies. We ask for facts ; Mr. Marryat gives us reasonings. We demand proofs ; and he confesses he knows little of the subject !

Mr. Marryat has turned a quotation in Hudibras against the West India Missionaries ; but there is a passage in a book which he would read to better effect, to which we solicit his attention before he writes again on the subject of Methodist Missions : " He that answereth a matter before he heareth it is folly and shame to him."—BIBLE.

THE END.

